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This method of hunting serves only for antelope; Schebesta never saw okapi, wild boar, or big game brought in from such a hunt. 224 [136]

The beat hunt seldom takes place, says Schebesta (1941, 98), because it requires the participation of large numbers of people, often from more than one band, including women and young girls, who can seldom be persuaded to take part. Also, it occupies an entire day. Ritual preparations include setting fire to certain herbs by the hunt leaders (an old man and an old widow in the hunt described by Schebesta). This produces a dense smoke, the sight and scent of which bring the hunters to the attention of their God. The old widow asks that rain should not surprise them. The ritual takes place a little way off from the camp; the other members of the hunt when they arrive rub their temples and eyes with the cinders, as did the old couple, in order to see better. The *begbe* hunt then sets out, and, when a suitable spot is found, the women make their petards from a certain bush (Efe: *magba*). By rolling the leafy 224 372 [776] [782] [828] 224 824

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[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 173-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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sued and shot with bow and arrow whenever the opportunity arises but are never the object of organized hunting. Other smaller animals and birds are hunted individually; those that take refuge in holes in trees are smoked out.

Schebesta's account suggests that, despite his proficiency at the hunt, the Pygmy takes care to protect himself against its attendant dangers and disappointments by securing the cooperation of the God of the Forest, and of his ancestors, and by making use of magic. He carries charms, observes various taboos, and performs certain rites—mostly sympathetic. It is not clearly stated, however, exactly which rites and charms are used by which particular Pygmies; there is obviously a great deal of variation. Schebesta clearly indicates, however, that among the archers there seems to be a considerable amount of hunting magic and ritual, witnessed by their use of the special whistles (Efe: *segbe*), magic formulas, invocation, and ritual practices he describes.

[P. 173-C]

[ARCHERS]

222 a honey ax, and probably some liana to assist in the climbing of the tree where the bees have been found. The Pygmies smoke out the bees by thrusting glowing embers, wrapped in a leaf, into the hive. Then the hole is enlarged with the ax until the Pygmy can thrust in his hand and arm and take out the honey. Schebesta says [776] [782] that the honey gatherer throws some to the God of the Forest before he or anyone else is allowed to taste it. (A similar practice is attributed to [462] archers when they divide the game.) If the bees are the kind that construct a hive in a hole in the ground, then the honey is collected by women. This kind of bee does not sting, but the tree bee does. The honey is distributed by the woman to members of the local band as she thinks fit, the children receiving the largest share.

857 22 The direct contribution of the children to the food quest is mediocre. Apart from such help as they give their parents in hunting and gathering activities, the children amuse themselves by hunting forest rats and mice with miniature bows and arrows. Anything they catch in this

[P.175-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4 •
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Zaire FO1

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The *toré* society, however, widens the field of Mbuti social contact because it embraces, according to Schebesta (1948, 492 ff.), villagers and Pygmies throughout the Ituri, being basically the same as other societies going under different names, such as *anyoto*, *nebeli*, *molimo*, and *lusomba* (the latter two among the Bira-Sua). The common denominator of all these societies is the common belief in the bush demon, the divinity of the Mbuti hunters. The *toré* society, as seen by Schebesta, is thus the origin of similar villager societies in the district. It has a particular significance for the Mbuti who claim it as their own.

Although women are normally excluded, the Mbuti, says Schebesta, admit aged women. The villagers admit only one old woman who is charged with the duty of cooking for the men. Further, he says, the society terrifies the villager women (cf. Anne Putnam) which is not the case with the Mbuti. The society always meets outside the village, in the bush or in a remote, dark area of the forest. Schebesta (1948, 498) witnessed no exclusively Mbuti meeting of the *toré* society, only mixed Mbuti and villager, and exclusively villager, meetings.

The meeting place contains the hut of *toré*, in which are kept the musical instruments used during the ceremonies and on the march. The number and type of these instruments vary, says Schebesta, the commonest being a long trumpet made of wood, slightly curved, some-

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times called *lusomba* in Schebesta's account. All these instruments, he claims, however, produce sounds in imitation of the leopard. The archers do not carry the tattoo marks, such as those worn by the Bira-Sua, which resemble marks of a leopard's claw.

A further inquiry made among the archers in 1949 confirmed these observations (Schebesta, 1952, 279) and added some supplementary facts. The *toré* hut is to be found near or in the camp itself. Women and children may attend the *toré* ceremonies organized by the men. The "presidents" are an old man and an old woman. The meetings are held in honor of Kalisia, God of the Bush, who is, during the ceremony, implored for help in the hunt. The society, Schebesta concludes, has a religious aspect. This same study revealed the use of three wooden trumpets (*apadia*); a "sonorous pot" (*bodzo*), in fact a large clay vessel, and the tube through which the performer sings into it (*luma*); and three small whistles (*ilitodo*).

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without religion. From the descriptions given by the few writers who mention the existence of "spirit houses" and "temples," it may well be that these in fact belonged to villagers. The style of construction described by Geil (1905), for instance, is certainly Bantu. None of these sources offers any acceptable evidence that the Mbuti used these spirit houses and temples.

Schebesta, from the outset of his first visit to the Ituri, was convinced that the Mbuti had a religious system. He finally concluded that it comprised the notion of a dynamic but personal divinity, that it was essentially the same among all Ituri Mbuti, but that it differed from the religious concepts of the neighboring villagers though it was influenced by them. Schebesta asserts that the belief in a personal God is based on the notion of vital force. God possesses the totality of this force and distributes part of it to worldly beings. Thus God is regarded not as a transcendent creator but rather as a person who lived long ago. He is sometimes confused with the first ancestor and may be represented by the moon.

The confusing abundance of names and terms used by the various Mbuti is partly due to the different languages spoken by both Mbuti and villagers, and partly to villager influence, but it in no way denotes any fundamental difference in this basic concept of a personal God accompanied by the belief in a vital force.

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1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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[P. 189-A]

000 his basic concept of a personal God accompanied by the belief in a vital force.

114 Schebesta (1950) bases his detailed study of Mbuti religion on an eight-month sojourn among the southeast archers on his second visit to the Ituri. He also mentions other information collected during his two visits which is of relevance to the net hunters and the Kango farther west. Here we are concerned only with his archer material.

The Chthonic God

• 996 192 184 Among the Efe archers Schebesta found the name Toré, applied to what he designates as "*Buschgott*," or God of the Undergrowth. Other names frequently heard are Muri-muri, Mbali, Muku, Kalisia, Bi'i, Ba'atsi, Epilipili, Pucho-pucho, Matu, and Lodi. Like Toré, Muri-muri is found among all archers. Those to the north describe both Toré and Muri-muri as a small, Mbuti-like forest dweller, to meet whom is death because he is the destroyer of all. The central archers distinguish more clearly between Toré and Muri-muri. The latter, who is short in stature, is sometimes termed Toré ***bo'ichu*** (Costermans, 1938, Toré *bo'iko*). The former is,

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• 776 192 184 on the contrary, tall, and wanders through the forest, striking the trees as he moves about. According to some of these central archers, the mother of Toré is Mato (Matu), who lives in the mountains, and his father is Pucho-pucho; according to others, his mother is Ou-ororo, and his father Ogbi-oro, names which, according to Schebesta's linguistic studies, contain the words for fire and menstrual blood. The Chthonic God is, under many of his names, referred to as the original possessor of fire (as is the chimpanzee). Among the southern archers the possessor of fire is Mbali, and Bali is fire itself. These southern archers also regard Toré as lord of the world and creator of all things. For this reason they make offerings to him of all their products from hunting and gathering. (In this region the term Lodi is replacing Toré.)

776 392 825 776 184 [782]

776 76 184 [825] All Efe agree that Toré sends death. The southern archers believe this because they disobeyed his command to refrain from following and spying on him. Others say that Muri-muri had confined death in a pot, which he gave to a toad with instructions to take the greatest care of it. But the toad gave it to a frog who leapt away with it and broke it, thus letting death escape.

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1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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[P.189-C]

Any abnormal personal condition indicates the presence of Toré: mental confusion or disorder, shivering spells, goose flesh, dreams, bad luck, and misfortune. Toré is everywhere. He is absolute lord of the forest, of all animals and human beings, of life and death. Everything belongs to him because he created everything, but the forest is his particular kingdom. He is offended by failure to make him offerings from the chase, by quarrels within the band, by disrespect for elders, by infraction of lineage exogamy, by failure to make appropriate sacrifices. He punishes such actions or omissions by causing trees to fall, by visiting man-eating leopards on the community (or individual) concerned, by closing the forest to the hunter.

Essentially the giver of all good, he is also the source of death and misfortune. Schebesta finds it difficult to reconcile the undoubted affection with which the archers respect their God and their fear of him. They call him "father" and "grandfather," acknowledging him as the giver of the good life, on the one hand, while, on the other, they fear him in his disconcerting association with fatality.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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ation with fatality. Schebesta attributes this to a confusion of religion and magic, a confusion of Mbuti notions of God the Father with villager notions of the demon of the forest (for the villager, the forest is essentially evil). Costermans (1938) claims that Schebesta fails to take account of the essential difference between Toré and Muri-muri which he himself noticed among the central archers (above) but chose to ignore.

Schebesta believes that, though different groups of archers give precedence to one name or another, there is only one God of the Undergrowth, and he is universally associated with fire, lightning, storms, death, the rainbow (which frequently brings death), dreams, as well as with the good life of the hunter. The chameleon is the sacred animal of the archers, in rapport with the sky and the moon, the storm and lightning.

There is also a belief in *befe*, forest sprites, whose lord and master is Mbali or Kalisia. (The Lese and Mvuba use the term *lodi* for similar sprites, says Schebesta.) They are also called *toré mo-ichu*. They make their presence known by two sorts of sound: one lugubrious, portending death, the other auguring good.

Cult Practices

A number of practices are associated with the

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1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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[P. 190-A]

782 God of the Undergrowth in the form of invoca-
• 776 tions, offerings, propitiatory sacrifice, and perhaps also a number of the practices of the *toré* association. There is no cult to any celestial divinity, of which the Mbuti have only vague notions.

782 Invocations usually concern the weather (re-
82 quests for a storm to pass over speedily or to be
372 diverted) and are often accompanied by the
534 blowing of the *segbe* magic pipe, indicating with the arm the direction the storm should take. The archers also may light a special fire and cover it with leaves so that a thick smoke rises. The God of the Undergrowth sees the smoke, smells its fragrance, and hears the *segbe* pipes. His attention is thus drawn to the plight of his "children." There is a similar ritual of fire and
782 smoke in connection with the hunt, particularly
224 the apparently ancient *begbe* beat hunt, as is
372 mentioned above (p. 172). Invocations frequently use the term "father" or "grandfather."

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782 All Mbuti are said by Schebesta to offer a portion of food to the God of the Undergrowth. We can take this to apply to the archers. The practice seems to concern only food that has been hunted or gathered—game, honey, and vegetable products. The offering, never made with great fervor, may simply be thrown into the undergrowth, either in silence or with a brief comment such as *"Mugu! daó a iye!"* (*"Mugu!* This is for you!"). Alternatively, it may be placed on a leaf and taken with care into the forest and put in the fork of a tree, with or without an invocation. Stakes may be used, driven into the ground, forked into three or more branches at the upper end. Clay pots (obtained from villagers) or potsherds are placed in these forks for the offerings. Holes in the sides of trees are also used as a depository for offerings. The Mbuti do not usually use special shrines or spirit huts, affirms Schebesta, though in imitation of the villager ancestor shrines, they sometimes build crude shelters for the God of the Undergrowth and, on occasion, place offerings there.

[415] [177]

According to one of Schebesta's archer informants, sacrifice following the hunt is not to Toré but to the *lodi* (the dead) who then intercede with Toré.

[224] [769] [776]

Another important sacrifice is made for the re-opening of the forest (*abo lese* or *sulia*). Continuously bad hunting may be attributed to the anger of the God of the Undergrowth, caused by

782 776 224

[P. 190 - B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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some individual among Toré's children. In his anger he closes the forest so that the hunters can kill no game. Under the circumstances all the weapons in the camp are brought out and placed in a pile in the center of the clearing. The hunters stand around in a circle, each with an arm held over the weapons. As described by Schebesta, the transgressor, who had divided game he had caught without waiting for the elder, brandished a live chicken over the center of the circle praying for success in the hunt. In the invocation he mentioned Bali (local name for the God of the Undergrowth), "fathers," "grandfathers," and the name of his own father who had apparently been an outstanding hunter. Then the elder cut off the head of the chicken, sprinkled blood on the weapons and the arms of the hunters, and threw the fluttering carcass onto the ground. Everyone watched which way it moved, and when it finally fell with the stump of its neck pointing toward the forest, this was taken as a good omen and there was a [787]

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776
224

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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shout of joy. The wife of the elder then took the carcass and invoked Bali and the ancestors, asking them to give their children game again. The dead chicken was then given to a woman married into another band who, together with her children, ate it. This woman's son, a nephew of the band concerned, built a small hut (*sa'a*) near the elder's hut, and placed in it the heart and liver of the chicken; the head was stuck on a stake above. The elder made an invocation for game to both Bali and the *befe* (sprites).

Schebesta came across this ceremony twice, once at Rodjo and once at Maseda, identical each time except for minor differences. Certain details, he claims, are borrowed from the villagers, such as the use of a chicken, which the Mbuti do not raise. He thinks that the sprinkling of blood is also foreign but that nonetheless there evidently was once an indigenous ceremony for opening the forest, involving the offering of the heart and entrails of game.

This practice of invocation and sacrifice to the "*Buschgott*" is held by Schebesta (1950, 209) to be the most significant feature of Mbuti religion, distinguishing it clearly from the religion of the villagers who have no cult to the forest God.

Costermans (1938), however, believes that the word "Toré" cannot be associated with "God," that the *toré* association has no religious

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1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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[P. 191-A]

function, any more than has the whole ritual of initiation. *Toré*, according to Costermans, is, if anything, a spirit cult. The *toré* are spirits of the dead, known under different names such as *toré bo ichu*, *toré bo iko*, *toré ba iza*, and are clearly differentiated from the godhead. Sacrifice to Toré may take two forms, writes Costermans, *toré lusi* and *toré luba* (*lusi*, invoke; *luba*, throw, offer), and is practiced more by Lese villagers than by the archers, who practice it only rarely, for the hunt. Costermans, far from denying that the Mbuti possess a notion of God, affirms that they do, as do the villagers, but insists that it is dissociated from the *toré* cult described by Schebesta.

Death and Afterlife

The Pygmy notion of soul appears complex and confused to Schebesta (1950, 90; 1952, 332). He attributes the confusion to heavy borrowing from the villagers, the Mbuti originally having little interest in life after death. There is a distinction between body, shade, and soul, respectively, *ela* (or *eda*), *tedi*, and *boru e'i* (or *borupi* in Efe). The Lese villagers make the same distinction. Breath, *ekeu*, is a vital force, extinguished at death. The Mbuti believe that shades become *befe*, or forest sprites, and the villagers claim that they become *lodi* or *keti*, phantoms.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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[P. 191-C]

the Mbuti world. The other principle becomes one of the forest sprites, the *befe*, living with the earthly divinity, Toré, and assisting him in his lordship of the forest. Far from representing the dead, these sprites are regarded as knaves, to be fought with as such. In legends they are concerned principally with the hunt and frequently try to trick the Pygmy out of his prey to which, as *befe*, they have a right themselves. If they represented the souls of the dead, suggests Schebesta, the Mbuti would hardly be able to take the attitude toward them that they do.

775 776 [761]

Death may also be regarded by the Pygmy as a punishment visited on man for one of three sins. God forbade his children to look at him, but one of his daughters was overcome by curiosity, and death resulted. (This legend is actually found more frequently among the net hunters than the archers.) God forbade his children to follow him on a certain path, but they became impatient and followed, and death resulted. God (Muri-muri) left fire in the care of his mother, Matu; but a Pygmy stole it from her and she died from cold, so Muri-muri condemned all men to die. This curiosity, impatience, and greed are severally cited as causes of death.

761 773 [184]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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The paramount symbol of death is the rainbow, whose representative is the python. The archers sometimes associate the rainbow with Matu, aged mother of Toré, the magic dancer who lured children to the forest never to return, or only to return demented. She is also the dreaded animal that hides among the rocks and kills passers-by with a glance.

The rainbow is associated not only with death but with sorcery, as is Matu and, according to Costermans, Toré. Like Matu it kills either by being seen by man or by looking at him. The archers, as do the net hunters, differentiate between the rainbow in the east and the rainbow in the west. (The Bira even name them differently.)

Lightning is of lesser importance, being a mere work tool of God which can be used by him to bring death. It sometimes appears in the form of a bird.

Totem and Taboo

According to Schebesta, the archers consider the clan and the lineage as indistinguishable. A clan may be entirely contained within a single

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1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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[P. 193-A]

114 sion, based as it often is on data provided by unreliable informants but passed as certain fact (Boelaert). According to Costermans, Schebesta's conclusions result from his selection of data to suit his (admitted) preconceived theories. Further, Schebesta relies, as he himself says, on the evidence provided by legends which he accepts without exercising any of the caution necessary for the proper use of such material. Possibly many of the legends and the associated concepts are indeed of Lese origin.

The Godhead

771 The Chthonic God of the Undergrowth
• 776 plainly does not stand by itself, not even when supported by an embryonic "*Totengottheit*," which Schebesta finds among the archers but believes to be of little significance. From an examination of Mbuti mythology and a comparative study of religious terms, Schebesta concludes that there is a third, and important if vaguely conceptualized, "*Himmelsgottheit*."

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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771 Mbuti religion thus resolves into a dualism, if
• 776 not so neatly as it would were Toré, as Costermans (1938) believes, always associated with misfortune and death. For Schebesta the dualism is manifest in both the sky God and the earth God, but not between them.

776 He finds Toré, as we have seen, to be associated with both life and death, good and bad, fortune and misfortune. Even in his most benevolent moments, Toré seems to be necessarily associated with Matu, personification of menstrual blood and its connotations of sorcery and death, if not the personification of the dreaded rainbow itself.

The earth God is addressed as "father" or "grandfather," but the names used for the sky God, despite their diversity from one area to another, all have one common characteristic—their linguistic association with words connoting brightness, movement, or creation. The sky world is thought of as being much the same as the earth world, though much embellished in mythology. The celestial God is an old man,

[P.193-B]

[P.193-C] [ARCHERS]

The celestial God is an old man, with a beard which brings wind and storm to the earth world when it shakes. The Mbuti respect him, but offer no cult to him; he is too far removed and plays no direct part in the life of the earth world. He is linked to it, however, and plays his part in the Pygmy rationale as the ultimate source of all vital force which creates and gives life. It flows from the sky God into human beings, but his superabundance of the life force insures his permanent overlordship. The Mbuti regard him as the source of all creation and the support of the universe, without seeking to understand how he creates and preserves, or why he destroys by reclaiming the vital force he dispenses. 776 [821] [761]

Schebesta states that the Mbuti place this sky God in the moon and thus even *deus otiosus* is involved in dualism, for the moon by its brightness is associated with fire, and by its periodicity with menstrual blood—the two symbols of life and death. (Both fire and menstrual blood have the dual association.) 776 772 761 821 [372] [841]

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There is no attempt to rationalize the fact that the force emanating from the sky God works both good and evil; it is just accepted as a fact. But it is exactly this fact that is the thread binding the various notions that form the Mbuti magico-religious system. Magic itself, good or bad, can be practiced only through the use of this force. The personal sky God himself is, for Schebesta, the supreme magician, manifest in different and opposing ways, whose power is everywhere. He is too remote to be the object of any cult but is, in a sense, represented among human beings by the lineage elders, inasmuch as they inherit the power of the original ancestors; hence, the respect and obedience that is their due.

If the outward manifestations of Pygmy religion mainly concern the God of the Undergrowth, if the cult practices seem overgrown with magic and superstition, and if there is any appearance of polytheism in the Mbuti rationale, all is resolved (for Schebesta, at least) into a consistent monotheism by the basic Mbuti belief in vital force.

[P 193-D]

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Mbuti

FIG. 52. Split clappers, *banja*, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri.

533 which *molimo* songs may or may not be sung.
535 Such a meeting may be said to be religious, in
796 that it is known by all that the songs effect
[796] some kind of communion with the God of the Forest, but they are not held with any specific purpose. After an evening meal the men sit together around the main fire, talking and smoking. The subject of conversation may take a serious turn, or there may simply be a long silence during which one or another of the men starts singing. In either case someone quite spontaneously starts singing a *molimo* song, and the others join in. At such times the women and children remain sitting, as is their habit, around their individual fires outside their huts; they

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tinue until first light, according to the Putnam material. Once a meeting is begun, it may continue nightly for as long as a month. It is obligatory for all members to attend, and those who are away visiting return to take part. Visitors in the camp also take part if they qualify as hunters. Men, and more particularly youths, sometimes improvise headdresses of cane and feathers (Fig. 50), similar to those worn by village men and women during initiation festivities. Putnam says that food may be prepared for the men by a woman (it is not known who), but that she never appears and has no other function in the proceedings.

In my own experience the words of the songs that are sung by the *molimo* are not supplicatory but are mainly repetitions of one or other of the names of the God of the Forest, or affirmations of his goodness and omnipotence. The songs are, nonetheless, effective means, as far as the Mbuti are concerned, of securing an end to the crisis. The purpose of these meetings is undoubtedly to restore the normality to a community which in some way or another has deviated."

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complete documentation places it in the realm of hypothesis rather than fact. 128

The Chthonic God

Schebesta does not specify whether the particular Mbuti from whom he collected most of his Sua material are net hunters or archers. But, except for his remarks on the Kango and "village Sua" (1952, 49, footnote, 301) to the extreme west of the Ituri forest, he seems to have drawn largely on the southeastern Mbuti. His information (1950, 14–24) does not differ greatly from that for the archers. The names given to the divinity are Mu(n)gu, Keti, Kalisia, and So(n)ge. Epulu net hunters also loosely use the term Mungu, as do the neighboring villagers. According to Schebesta, Kalisia is the lord of the forest and game, and patron of the hunters, whom he loves. They owe everything to him. Above all, he is a benevolent God, helping the Mbuti in the hunt, guiding their weapons and assisting the beat, preceding the beaters and opening the trail. He is also the lord of dreams, making his wishes known to the elder, telling the hunter where to find game.

114 [184] 176 • [224] [187]

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Mbuti

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Kalisia, if displeased with the Mbuti, will close the forest to them, until they make the propitiatory sacrifice *sulia*. The Mbuti are expected to make offerings to Kalisia from their food-gathering and hunting expeditions, and Schebesta (1952, 304) mentions a shrine for this purpose (*ende kela*). The hunters may less ceremoniously throw offerings of food into the forest. Schebesta says that no Mbuti in his right mind would fail to make these propitiatory sacrifices: "*à ce que m'a raconté un Nègre Bira*" (Schebesta, 1952, 304). Unfortunately, Schebesta does not always identify his source of information. However, from a number of admissions such as that noted above, we must assume that his informants were frequently villagers, not Pygmies, and that he also relied on the question-and-answer technique among both villagers and Mbuti (Schebesta, 1933, 171).

Both Schebesta and Putnam agree that the forest God of the net hunters is feared by the villagers, who regard him in no way as benevolent, in contrast to the Mbuti.

Schebesta also mentions the celestial divinity Songe (the moon), with its own remote world, as the sky God of the archers; also Keti, a bush

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776 God and lord of the *ba-keti*, the dead. Schebesta (1950, 23) says that among the "Sua" he was not able to discover any association of the rainbow, lightning, thunder, or death, with the benevolent "*Jägergottheit*" (Kalisia).

The Putnam material does not attempt to interpret the Mbuti notion of a chthonic God. Among the Epulu net hunters, Kalisia is apparently unknown to the Mbuti, who use the term Mungu both among themselves and when talking with villagers. This God is benevolent, though in some mysterious way that does not detract from his benevolence he is associated with death.

776 775 Disaster, ill fortune, and lack of success in the chase are usually attributed to *satani* (also *sitani*, *shaitani*), forest sprites akin to the archer *befe* (Schebesta gives the Sua word as *beki*). It seems that Mbuti may become *satani* when they die, but it is not clear by any means that all *satani* were once Mbuti. They are never [761] referred to as though they had been Mbuti, though at death the word *satani* is sometimes used in connection with a vital force leaving

l: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

776 the body (p. 238). There is also some confusion
775 among the net-hunter Mbuti between the terms *mungu* and *satani*, which at times appear to be interchangeable. Schebesta (1948, 493) says that the local Bira refer to these forest sprites as "*molimo*," the name they also give to their secret association of men.

776 As with the archers, abnormal conditions of the physical world denote the presence of the chthonic God. At such times the net hunters are careful not to expose themselves to his sight, which would bring death, nor to attract his attention by unseemly behavior. He is a benevolent God but one best kept at a distance. There is no evidence of any connection between God and the lineage through the elder, but each hunting band seems to regard Mungu, while God of all Mbuti everywhere, as being particularly concerned with them.[1]

Cult Practices

788 In so far as ritual is a response to uncertainty
182 or crisis, the net hunters have far less need of it than many other peoples. As we show above, their forest environment provides them with

[1] In view of the extremely loose usage of the term *mungu*, I interpret net-hunter expressed attitudes as indicating a belief in a local deity, not necessarily named Mungu, somehow related to the over-all God.

[P 239-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

[P. 238-A]

any other god or spiritual being for protection or aid. Mbuti ritual, such as it is, is simply "A number of symbolic actions performed as parts of technological operations in order to smooth over the disturbance caused by some kind of change," e.g., the elephant-hunting ritual in which the youngest male descendant of the hunter ritually pierces the elephant's side and opens the operations dividing the meat for consumption (cf. p. 207).

Putnam, further, was never convinced that the *Mbuti* had any notion similar to the European notion of God. He disagrees strongly with Schebesta's interpretation of Mbuti religious practice as indicating a belief in a personal god. He suggests that the ritual practices described by Schebesta were, in fact, no more than sympathetic magic, and that a belief in the direct cause and effect in their magical practices is the only kind of "religious" belief that can safely be ascribed to the forest dwellers, Pygmy or villager.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

The dividing line between magic and religion, according to Putnam, is even more difficult to draw with the Mbuti than with other people. His notes, however, do not attempt any analysis. The only other available information on cult practices is a few isolated descriptions in Mrs. Putnam's notes. These, except for the description of burial, are given in the section on Magic (p. 239).

Death and Afterlife

There is hardly any information on the notions of the net hunters on life after death, except that they firmly believe that life continues in some form or another, in much the same way that it is lived by the living. There is some indication, both from Mbuti informants and from the legends collected by Mrs. Putnam in the Epulu District, that the net hunters believe that when a body dies, a vital part of it, the personality or soul, leaves. It may become either a forest sprite (*satani*), or it may go to some other place where it will have nothing further to do with the living. In either case it will live much as it lived before—hunting and gathering, dancing and singing. *Satani*, however, can die, whereas there is no death in the more remote spirit world.

The net hunters believe that death is caused by the water animal that is the rainbow that is, sometimes, the python. It is not clear whether

[P. 238-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

[P. 238-C]

the water animal is the cause of all death or whether it causes only unexplained deaths. It seems that it may not be connected with "normal" deaths—deaths that do not, in fact, cause any particular crisis as far as the community as a whole is concerned.

According to Mrs. Putnam's notes,[1] the water animal that is the rainbow is also the *molimo*. She asked a direct question as to whether this was so or not and was given an affirmative answer by one of her most reliable informants. She says that his manner seemed to indicate further that she had asked the right question. According to the same informant the *molimo* comes out the day following the death of some important person, regardless of whether the death was by natural or other means. The informant also referred to a dance in which the men "chased" the *molimo*, but this evidently was not one of the serious *molimo* dances as it was not fatal for women to see it. It seems certain that the water animal and the rainbow are

[535]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

two manifestations of the same spiritual being and that both this being and the *molimo* are in some way connected with death. The former causes death (whether in some or all cases is not known), but the latter seems to be different in that it appears only the day following death and can restore normality to the community in crisis (not only death) rather than cause crisis. The *molimo* association calls to the *molimo* "animal" in times of crisis and brings it physically into the camp, according to Mrs. Putnam's notes. It appears to be propitiated by offerings of food, which is consumed by members of the *molimo*, and by dance and song.

No information is given as to any belief in the origin of death, or of any human failings that might cause it other than violation of the *molimo* by a woman or of the *elima* by a man. Infringement of rules of exogamy and other taboos may or may not cause death; individual opinion among the net hunters varies considerably on such matters.

According to local informants, the only villagers that have the *molimo* are the Bira, Lese, Ndaka, and Bali.

Lightning is also a symbol of misfortune but not necessarily of death. When lightning comes at night, campfires may be covered so that the

[1] In her notes, Mrs. Putnam invariably uses the term *esumba* or *esamba* for *lusumba*.

[P 238-0]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

[P.239-C]

personal taboos, which simply involve the decision of individuals to abstain from eating certain foods. These may be the result of some near disaster involving the taboo animal, or the result of some physical allergy. Many personal taboos are acquired during puberty, but they can be acquired any time. During puberty a taboo may be "given" to the individual on the decision of his relatives who observe that he has an allergy to a certain food; or they may be, and at other times always are, acquired by personal volition. Porcupines, snakes, and slow game not used as clan totems are subject to personal taboo. 262

These forest animals that symbolize clans, sexes, and individual idiosyncracies, says Putnam, are personified by the Mbuti, who believe that they used to be able to talk and were on an equal footing with human beings. 784 614 825

Thus the totemism of the net hunters seems to be very different from that described by Schebesta for the archers, among whom there was neither sex nor individual totemism (p. 191). Further, Putnam denies that there is any belief, at least among the net hunters, in totemic ancestral spirits such as the *lodi* described by Schebesta. There are *genii loci*, *satani* who inhabit well-known caves, ravines, or hills, but Putnam says that these are not associated with clans. 184 784 184 776 825 [614]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[P. 241 - A]

761 754 266 work, the victim dies. If the victim himself awakes and recognizes the *lozi* who is killing him, or if he is bewitched by unwittingly sharing his food with a *lozi*, he can save himself by calling on that person to come to him. If the *lozi* comes he will be saved, otherwise he will die. But there are no instances that such ever happened.

761 754 177 This belief seems associated with death and with people who are near to that particular crisis. There is a recorded instance of two men, a Pygmy and a villager, who were both accused of being *lozi*. Some time later the villager died in the arms of the Pygmy; since then the village family have held that particular Pygmy in great respect. Among the Mbuti of this area, [538] however, the existence of *ulozi* seems to be of little, if any, practical significance, except as subject matter for storytellers.

The Godhead

• 776 114 [184] The Putnam material does not support any theory of a celestial God such as that described by Schebesta for both the archers and the net hunters. Putnam denies that there is any evi-

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]
[P. 241-0]

dence among the net hunters of a belief in a personal god. He asserts that all their ritual actions can be explained in terms of direct cause-and-effect belief, without any reference to spiritual beings. The Putnam material itself, however, indicates some notion of spiritual existence and power, although in nothing like the highly formalized system that Schebesta attributes to the archers. Coon, in his notes on an interview with Putnam (*in* Patrick Putnam, 1948), points out that the water animal is in a sense a personification of the storm, as is the belief that the neolithic axheads found throughout the forest are excreta dropped by lightning.

It is largely a question of degree. The material available is not sufficient for us to make any useful observations on the net-hunters' theology or cosmology. All that can be said is that there is a belief in a benevolent power associated with the forest (which may or may not be the *molimo*) and a power symbolized by the rainbow, or as a water animal, and associated with death. Whether these are two aspects of the same divinity, two distinct divinities, or unconnected with any notion of divinity cannot be said.

INTELLECTUAL AND ARTISTIC LIFE

184 53 There seem to be no significant points of divergence between archers and net hunters under this heading, except in theory and interpretation of their rationale. In music the archers make much more use of instruments than do the net hunters. Schebesta does not give details of the types of archer song such as given for the net hunters, which does not mean, of course, that such a classification into sacred and secular, for men and for women, does not hold equally well among the archers. It is simply one [121] of the many points on which we need more field data, and it may prove to be an extremely important point when it comes to trying to unravel the contradictions, implicit and explicit, in the material on religious life.

RELIGIOUS LIFE

721 184 114 Here, as in the previous section, the similarity of fact is far greater than the dissimilarity, though this may be obscured by the contradictory nature of various interpretations of the facts. It is here that Schebesta's work is more open to criticism, as it is here that his bias is strongest and here where the material most easily lends itself to interpretation in the light [575] of bias. Costermans (1938) raises an extremely important question when he questions Schebesta's assertion that the *toré* society is an in- [192] tegral part of the religious system of the archers [196] and that Toré is applicable as a term for God.
[P. 248-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

To

Z 182 881 776 778 [825] [532] [535] the villager the masked dancers described in the account of the 1954 *nkumbi* (Turnbull, 1957, 193) represent the *ngosa* bird, indicating the presence of a benevolent spirit. Similarly, the bullroarer represents supernatural power. The various taboos applied to the *ganza* express village subordination to that power which is sufficiently strong to prevent the villagers from staying in the camp over night even though it meant allowing an already unruly *ganza* further scope for getting out of control. The *nkumbi* places the villager initiates in a definite relationship to the supernatural. It is closely connected with tribal lore and the ancestor cult.

Z [769]

P 177 881 776 778 829 The Pygmies have no tribal lore and no ancestor cult. To them the masked dancers were the villagers, André and Sabani, and the bullroarer was a piece of wood whirled around on the end of a length of twine. The "*ngosa* bird" and the "voice of the spirit," for the Mbuti, were neither "real" nor did they represent any reality. They were empty and rather ineffective theatrical devices, an opinion evidenced both by conversation among the ganza at night and in their constant burlesque.

[P. 254-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

796 If this is magic, it is totally different from the
• 776 kind of magic practiced by the villagers, for
778 which the Mbuti reserve an attitude of skepti-
782 cal amusement. Whatever it is, it shows a very
575 different attitude to the forest from that of the
[829] villagers. My interpretation of the *molimo*, from the meetings I have attended and the conversations I have overheard, is that it is an association of hunters that has the power of making itself heard by the God of the Forest. This God is referred to by many different names, even within the same band, and, as frequently as not, is simply referred to as "The Forest," also, though less often, as "Father" and "Grandfather." The association must ful-
[533] fill the conditions listed above in order to make
[534] itself heard; the *molimo* horn used in conjunction with song is the focal point of the meetings.
[562] Women and children are presumably excluded,
[858] because hunting, the most important of all activities to the Mbuti and regarded by him as such, is primarily the province of men, and the God of the Forest is also God of the Hunt.[1] The dominant note of the meetings is unanimity and insistence. All hunters must attend. They sit in a tight group around the fire as if by this

[1] It might be expected that, as the net hunt involves cooperation between both sexes, the women would have some part to play in the *molimo* among net hunters, at least.

[D 257-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[P. 257-C]

physical disposition they are emphasizing their unity. Their means of communication are special songs, as mentioned in the survey, sacred to the *molimo*. These songs are not phrased in terms of explicit supplication. They merely call on the God of the Forest by constant repetition of his name (frequently changing from one name to another, it seems for the sake of variety and euphony), and an occasional recitation of his qualities as the source of all good in the Mbuti life is given. This song is echoed by the *molimo* horn, which is far off in the forest, though it may, in the course of the meeting, visit the camp. The song is picked up by the lone performer who follows it, singing it into the horn, passing it on still farther into the forest, finally letting it die away into the distance.

796 778 778 782 595 796 778 778 782 533 595

In this way the Mbuti make sure that their song is heard. Sung in this way, the song itself rouses their God from an apparent state of sleep or detachment, bringing him to a consciousness of the plight of his children. This, for the Mbuti, is sufficient. There is no attempt to ask for favors. The God of the Forest is the source of all that is good and bad, so that, as long as he is conscious of what is happening, the Mbuti are content. But they say that sometimes he sleeps, and when he is asleep things come to pass that might have been prevented had he been awake. The *molimo* makes sure he is awake.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

With the *elima* it is similar. All adult women are members, and participation is compulsory in one's own camp or when visiting another. Communication with the forest God is again established by means of songs, special and sacred to the *elima*. However, the men take part. The *elima* meets on occasions of major concern to womenfolk—birth, arrival at the age of puberty, marriage, and death. Thus at birth and death, both the *elima* and the *molimo* are concerned. (As mentioned, however, the occasion of birth is little marked by ritual of any kind.) Both associations meet in the forest camp but out of sight of each other. The *elima* meets in the large *elima* hut or in a cluster of neighboring huts. Young children may be present. The exception, when the men take part in the meeting of the *elima*, is during the initiation of a girl.

In the survey we give an account of *elima* initiation (p. 216). If the *nkumbi* is not the initiation into the *molimo*, we must look elsewhere for this. When a boy kills his first "real animal," he is immediately acclaimed as a hunter, and

[P. 257-D]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

The function of these associations is to regulate the relationship of these Mbuti with their forest world, to maintain the normality of that relationship and to restore it when disturbed, by rousing the God of the Forest from his sleep by song, echoed into the forest by means of the *molimo* horn in the case of formal meetings of the men's association. This god is the source of good and bad, and it is therefore sufficient to waken him. There is no formal supplication phrased in words as such.

The *molimo* and *elima* are distinct from village association with similar names and from whatever association it is into which the *nkumbi* initiates the villagers. Mbuti participation in the *nkumbi*, as in other village ceremonies, is part of the mutual attempt of two peoples forced together by historical reasons and present territorial juxtaposition to regularize their relationship, each to his own satisfaction. Trade is another such expression of their relationship; it is not the basis of it. Further, participation in the *nkumbi* involves an opposition between two sets of values (those of the villagers and those of the Mbuti taking part), as *nkumbi* initiation does not qualify the Mbuti for entry into his own religious association nor accord him any status in his own society. It enables him to move as an adult in villager society and gives the two peoples some common ground involving a superficially subordinate position for the Mbuti.

1, [Molimo and Elima associations --Analyst]

[p. 258-C]

I: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

539 Among the few legends commending the good
597 mother and father, the good brother and sister,
593 only one takes the opposite approach and tells
• 776 of the bad mother. I include it in this section because the emphasis seems to be on the thoughtlessness of the mother rather than the trickery of the *satani*.

A Pygmy, his wife, and his child, were all asleep. In the middle of the night the child woke up and began crying. He cried and he cried. He was crying from hunger, because his mother had not fed him. At last the mother got up and gave the child a plantain. Then she went back to lie down and they all fell asleep again. A little while later the child woke up again and started crying again because he was still hungry. He cried and he cried, but his father and his mother went on sleeping.

A *satani* arrived. "Why are you crying, my child?" he asked. "I am crying because I am hungry!" replied the child. "My mother hasn't given me enough to eat and she won't wake up."

So the *satani* fixed two pots of plantains, and lots of meat. He put them on the fire to cook. When it was all ready he put the food in front of the child and the child ate, and ate, and ate. "Oh! This is good!" said the child, and he ate still more. When he finished there was still a pot of plaintains and lots more meat, so the *satani* said, "Eat some more, my child, then

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[P. 263-C]

you will not wake up hungry again." So the child ate some more. 539 577 593 776.

At last the child had finished all but a few plantains and a little meat. "Oh! How full I am!" he said, holding his little stomach. "I have had enough, really." But the *satani* pointed to the plantains and the meat that still remained and said, "You must eat some more, or you will surely wake up hungry!" "But I have eaten all I can, really!" said the child. "Eat!" said the *satani*.

The child took a plantain and slowly began to eat it, then suddenly BAM! He burst. The *satani* vanished. The mother and father woke with a start and saw the dead body of their little child. "Oh, what can have happened?" cried the mother. And there was much grief.

But the father knew what had happened, the mother had let the child go to bed hungry. So the next night when they lay down to sleep, the father slept only with his eyes. In the middle of the night the *satani* arrived to see if there were any more children who had been allowed to go to bed hungry, so that he could feed them until they burst. The father leapt out of his bed and seized the *satani* and cried, "You devil! You killed our son because his mother allowed him to go to bed hungry!"

And the father killed the *satani* completely.

Basi

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

worlds. A number of legends deal with the cleverness of old people. There are old aunts and old grandmothers who eat children left in their care, and old men and women are frequently deserted by the Pygmies when they move camp (in their legends). Yet these old people can use their powers for good, if so inclined, as in the legend of the old woman with yaws who tried to save three young Pygmies from being killed and eaten by a tricky old man. Also, of course, it is the old people who have the most success in dealing with the *satani*. But (discussion of this aspect of old age is given in the next section) the legends do reveal quite clearly that old age, when accompanied by disability, is regarded with loathing by the Pygmies as, indeed, is disability by itself. In the legends, old people and cripples are given every chance to prove that they are still useful members of society. The old cripple who is deserted but who can kill a *satani* and rejoin his hunting group is welcomed back. But another old cripple who cannot move at all when he is deserted, although he kills two *satani* who attack him, is left to die. Old women seem particularly suspect, and I cite here an example of sanctioned matricide. I might add that I have never known this to occur and that, in my experience, the Mbuti take great care of their old people. At the same time I must admit to having seen no complete cripples and to having heard disquieting stories

539 828 577 888 539 828 577 888 732 [776] [682] 539 577 888 732

[P264-D]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

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There is another link between the animal and the supernatural worlds in the alleged existence of "water animals." These water animals are not particularly dangerous spirits; they appear rather as vehicles to transport the Pygmy from the natural world to the supernatural. There is a legend told by the Epulu Pygmies of a man who was known, they say, to their fathers.

> There was once a man called Ngoyi. He was tired of all his relatives and said: "I can't live with you any longer. I'm going to live on my own." And off he went to the river named Tato, where he disappeared into the water. He called out, "I'm going to stay here in the water, and you won't be able to see me any more."
>
> His family had all followed him to the river and asked: "Are you really going to stay there in the water?" He replied, "Yes." He called his children and took them into the water with him. They all disappeared.
>
> Now Ngoyi was a clever worker of wood, and, if you go to the river today and throw in a piece of wood, he will make it into whatever you want. His children are there also, and during the day time they come out to play. And even though they disappear when you come near, you can always hear them talking.
>
> *Basi*

Another legend tells how two brothers were crossing a stream, and one fell in. The other

[P. 268-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[P. 268-C]

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thought his brother had been drowned, and returned to camp with the news, but actually he had become a water animal. Some weeks later the land brother saw his water brother and tried to tempt him home, so glad was he to see him still alive. But the water brother caught hold of him and pulled him into the water, so the land brother also became a water animal.

And the two Water Brothers stayed in the stream; they stayed in the stream and never came out again.

A third legend connects the rainbow with these water animals.

Some girls were off cutting wood. They crossed a stream by a fallen tree. But really the tree was the "bad water animal, called *klima*, the Rainbow." When returning they all crossed, except the slowest of the girls, and a man who waited for her. As these two were halfway across, the dead tree, which was really the rainbow which was really a water animal, suddenly dived down into the water, carrying them with it. Later on, the couple was seen sitting on a rock in the middle of the stream, but never again after that.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

Quite distinct from the water animals are the forest spirits which these Pygmies call *satani*. They are, unlike the water animals, capable of being dealt with. Their outstanding characteristic is an excess of cleverness amounting to the grossest trickery. They molest the Pygmies on every possible occasion, stealing their food, devouring them in anthropophagous orgies. The Pygmies resort to cleverness of the same order. It is perfectly possible, though difficult, for a Pygmy to outwit a *satani*, even to kill one. But one of the legends warns against imitating a *satani's* ways too closely.

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One day a Pygmy and his child went for a walk. They collected some *eseli* nuts. On the way they met a *satani*. The *satani* put a nut on the child's head and split the nut with a machete. "Oh!" said the Pygmy, "that's like the *nkumbi* circumcision school. Tomorrow, I'll collect some more nuts and try that."

The next day he went with his child to the same place and collected some more *eseli* nuts. He put one of the nuts on his child's head and hit it with his machete. He killed his child dead. The *satani*, who had been watching, said, "See! You have killed your child."

The Pygmy left his child's body there and went down to the river. The *satani* went with him. The *satani* threw his spear into the water. The Pygmy said, "I'd like to do that!" But, when he tried, the

[P. 268-D]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[P.269-A]
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spear went all over the place, everywhere except into the water. He said: "When you do it, *satani*, it goes straight, yet when I do it it goes all over the place." They left each other.

Basi

Pygmies become *satani* far less frequently than they become water animals, but it can happen. The woman who gossiped became a *satani*. The following tale tells how a certain Pygmy was driven to the same fate by his relatives.

There was once a young Pygmy whose name was Mambalia. His relations kept whipping and whipping him until at last he could bear it no more and ran away into the forest. His family followed him, but he built a huge fire and said: "I am not going back—never!" And he ran even farther away. His relations returned to their camp.

After that, whenever Mambalia heard voices he ran farther away still, until finally, he said: "Now this is my part of the forest, and nobody must come here. I'm going to stay here all by myself."

He lived in a hole in a tree where no one could find him. He became very, very powerful. He became a *satani*. And now he is an old, old man.

Basi

Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

538 *Satani* are very popular with the Mbuti as
776 subject matter for their legends, and they let their imaginations run riot. A *satani* can do almost anything except kill a really clever Pygmy. They are used frequently as excuses for failure in the hunt or in honey gathering. When a Pygmy has found a good honey tree and has managed to consume most of the honey himself, his excuse to the camp for not bringing back more will be that he was waylaid by a *satani* who was so tricky that he turned into the Pygmy's grandmother, so he had to hand over all his honey, or something to that effect. (This excuse I heard myself.) Rather than examine more *satani* legends, we now briefly review the collection as here presented and draw such conclusions as we can.

538 Any conclusions are necessarily general and
128 tentative and are of course based not only on a knowledge of the entire collection of legends, only a bare tenth of which is reproduced here, but of the Mbuti themselves. Also it must be emphasized that we are dealing with only one particular band of Pygmies, a net-hunting group in the Epulu District of the Ituri Forest.

My classification of the legends into three groups, which is quite arbitrary and satisfactory

[P 269- B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

538 182 789 is no standard body of folklore; it is rather a matter for individual, spontaneous invention or adaptation. Now it is reasonable to suppose that a standard folklore is associated with magical belief, for magical belief is no more than a socially accepted way of explaining the otherwise inexplicable. If the reason cannot be clearly seen, it is invented and at least clearly understood. With the Mbuti such is not the case. [176] [154] [154] There is no common explanation of death or illness in terms of witchcraft or sorcery. A man invents his own legends; he invents his own explanations for abnormal occurrences. The 538 776 nearest approach to standard mythological rationalization is perhaps the popularly accepted myth concerning *satani*. Yet *satani* are not malevolent (they do not wish disease and death on people). Though it is their nature to be dangerous, they are dangerous only when seen. They are essentially tangible. They work in a perfectly understandable way and can be counteracted in an equally intelligible manner.

538 Whatever their nature, the essential thing is
• 776 that, in counteracting *satani* danger the Pygmy in his behavior is absolutely pragmatic. He uses his spear or his bow and arrow and his cleverness. At most the Pygmy will use the common belief in *satani* as an explanation of some minor mishap, the real explanation of which he probably knows but is not willing to admit (carelessness during the hunt, failure while looking for honey, and so on). The belief in *satani* is never used to explain anything more. Yet it is the only common belief of this kind. We are undoubtedly faced, as the legends themselves indicate, with a people with no standard body of magical belief and practice.

[789]

It will need further field work and analysis to determine the connection here between myth and magic.

533 I mention one further factor, which in a way
771 may be said to be magical, and that is the
772 power of song. Yet it is so unlike magic in the accepted sense of that term (with connotations of witchcraft and sorcery) that I do not feel it affects the foregoing hypothesis. Here we enter another world, mentioned again and again in the legends. Unlike the world of animals and *satani*, with which the Pygmy can cope by cultivating cleverness, this world is one in which at first it seems that he has no such weapon. This is perhaps more truly the "supernatural." This is the world of water animals and

[P. 271-B]

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Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[For information on personification of "forest" as Provider, on reification of "forest" as a single mighty being or force to be placated, and on projection onto forest of both man-like emotions and impersonal supernatural power and sanctity: see 778.]

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 PO4 Pygmies PO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa PO1

which only the villagers *need* a cure. There are a number of such minor crises. Even if the action appears to be protective, it is still basically curative. For instance, theft is common in villages, and villagers have a number of magical cures for theft that prevent it by curing the situation that might give rise to this antisocial act. This may seem like an academic quibble, justifying the inclusion of protective magic under the definition of magic as curative activity, but it is more basic than that. If the Mbuti saw themselves in a future context they might be interested in protection, but one of their characteristics is to think in terms of the present. Theft is not a part of their behavior toward each other; there is nothing they have that the villagers can steal from them, so there is no immediate situation to be cured. But the danger of poor hunting is more real.

For the hunt the Mbuti themselves have divers cures, but mostly of a sympathetic nature and, considering the importance of the hunt, remarkably few. The villagers, on the other hand, have a great number of cures to offer, and if convenient the Mbuti accept them. But once again the question is one of need. From his experience the hunter sees no need to concern himself with the future: it is rare that the hunting is so poor that he goes hungry. It is rare indeed even that there could not be a surplus to trade with the villagers. But lack of meat for trade is always excused by a plea of bad hunting. In fact, the Mbuti even go further and point to the fact that they have no elaborate cures for bad hunting, so how can the villagers blame them for not bringing in meat? The villager then supplies the cures, and if these do not work he will even be told by the Mbuti that it must be witchcraft, and asked to call out a diviner. I know of three cases where Mbuti have been trained by villagers to divine witchcraft and are believed, by villagers, to be highly effective. But once again there is no question of dependence.

Other situations that need curing and that may be cured by empirical (i.e., "magical") means available to villagers alone include poor weather, attack by lightning, attack by a witch, or by the spirits of the forest (*keti*). The cures consist of divers charms and fetish bundles, but they are considered as effective only by the villagers. The Mbuti recognize man's inability to control the weather, though they have a small amount of very simple sympathetic weather magic; lightning strikes where it will, though again fires are covered by the Mbuti during a storm in case the flames attract lightning. As for attack by a witch, their attitude is somewhat ambivalent, but they do not place

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much faith in a charm against a witch's power, if such power exists; their own remedy is retreat to the forest, where there are no witches. They do not believe in the existence of malevolent *keti*, or spirits, as do the villagers.

In the realm of curative magic, then, the villager has nothing to offer that the Mbuti needs, and has no means of utilizing magic or exclusive village knowledge of magical techniques to control the Mbuti.

WITCHCRAFT

If it were not for their own misconception of village witchcraft, the Mbuti would be at no disadvantage through their own lack of it. As it is, however, they tend to confuse witchcraft and sorcery, and consequently find themselves dealing with a phenomenon totally outside their forest-world experience—conscious malevolence.

Their confusion is visible in their constant usage of the terms associated with sorcery, even when only witchcraft is implied. The forest hunters are aware of the theoretical difference, but simply do not believe in the existence of witchcraft substance. They are unwilling enough to believe in malevolent supernatural powers, but events combine to persuade them to belief.

Unlike magic, which applies to natural phenomena, witchcraft and sorcery deal necessarily with the supernatural, and create their own need for protection. But whereas the villagers, in their acceptance of the theory of witchcraft substance, can happily accept a fetish bundle as adequate protection, the Mbuti, seeing the whole thing as malevolent sorcery, cannot believe that a bundle of sticks and bones is going to afford much help. Looking at witchcraft—and sorcery—as something belonging essentially to the village world, however, they do have recourse in flight to the forest, where, in their experience, these supernatural powers cannot easily reach. In the village world they can find no protection, and can only hope for an end to the underlying hostility.

Thus witchcraft, which among the villagers is essentially a mechanism for social control, being a concept employed usefully to bring to light hidden sources of dispute and to publicly shame troublemakers, inadvertently gives the villagers a weapon against the Mbuti, while at the same time it drives the Mbuti both literally back into

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that way toward the villagers, who are like animals, they also are forced to recognize that the villagers may feel similarly released from laws that would otherwise prevent them from using sorcery as a means of revenge. The villagers, in point of fact, usually deny actually using sorcery, even against the Mbuti, but they admit to using the threat of it. They do, however, use the doctor, who also has access to supernatural powers for the social good, but this involves religion rather than witchcraft or sorcery. It is mentioned here because the Mbuti considers the power, not the agent. Be it witch, sorcerer or doctor, it makes no difference; the Mbuti still has no recourse but flight.

Even flight, however, will not entirely remove the sneaking fear that persists despite expressed disbelief in these supernatural powers. And that power is perhaps no small factor in effectively giving the villagers some measure of control, though the villagers happily do not realize it. They simply believe in the efficacy of their magic, and of their supernatural powers.

The extent of the control that comes this way is difficult to measure, and it has to be balanced against the extent to which the situation drives the Mbuti into an even greater reliance upon their forest world, separating the two worlds still further. It certainly can be seen to operate effectively in inducing reluctant Mbuti to fulfill specific bargains. I did not come across any instances where the actual or threatened use of supernatural powers was invoked to control the normal course of the exchange relationship. But there were a number of instances over a twelve-month period in which Epulu villagers invoked supernatural powers to revenge themselves against Mbuti who had behaved with particular irresponsibility.

Three of the cases were of alleged sorcery. Sefu of Epulu village claimed that two Mbuti had accepted beans from him and had not sent him the meat they had promised in return. He said he had employed a sorcerer to make the Mbuti bleed to death if they did not give him the meat. But he lost courage when he thought that the administrator might get to hear of it, [illegible] he recanted. The Mbuti concerned sent him a token amount of meat and the matter was considered as settled.

André, headman of the village known by the name of his late father, Effundi Somali, claimed to have himself invoked supernatural aid against an Mbuti who refused to pay him money received by him when he captured a live okapi and brought it to the government *station de chasse*.

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two or three yards of the hut, which in that case continues to be occupied. The main difference between the death of a child and that of an adult is that the death of an adult is likely to be made into an occasion for a *molimo* festival; a child's death is seldom marked in this way, and if at all then only briefly.

Because the *molimo* has more to do with life than death it is dealt with separately in the section on religious life of the Mbuti. Here it should simply be noted that it coincides with the efforts of the elders to restore normality as quickly as possible. While personal grief is recognized and allowed, it is still resented and every effort is made to minimize it by those not so directly concerned. The majority of the band make every attempt to maintain a normal daily routine, and to ignore the death as far as possible. The *molimo* itself calls for vigorous hunting during the daytime, and equally vigorous singing and dancing at night. It involves the entire band except the children and through its very emphasis on life it reinforces band solidarity. Through the sheer pleasure found in *molimo* activities personal grief is lessened, and through the symbolic nature of some of the songs and dances the despair that death could otherwise awaken is averted. Death is acknowledged, in the *molimo* fire dance, as inevitable and as being unconnected with any unnatural force. The *molimo* songs stress that if death occurs it must occur at the will of the forest, and since the forest is good then death must be good. The *molimo*, however, goes beyond a mere acceptance of death, and many of the songs and dances are sheer expressions of joy in life, and the stated objective of the *molimo* is to make the forest happy, "to rejoice the forest."

Thus death affects the nuclear family through the personal nature of the loss, and it is the duty of the nuclear family, in the forest context, to dispose of the dead. They are prevented by the rest of the band from giving way to any prolonged exhibition of grief, and in any case by the time death takes place much of their grief has been spent in the last moments of sickness. The family may be aided by others in the burial, though help is not generally needed. But from that moment on, the band takes charge of the situation and concentrates on restoring the normality of life. The extent to which the *molimo* is a band affair rather than the affair of the nuclear family concerned will be seen later. It will also be seen, then, how death is made into an occasion for reaffirming the bonds of age groups, and for establishing their distinct responsibilities.

If life begins, for the Mbuti, with little fanfare, it ends with one

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mushrooms, of which there are many edible varieties at any one time throughout the year; the sweet *itaba* and similar roots, which are found by following its telltale vine along the ground, then grubbing with a stick for the roots at the end; nuts, of which there are again many varieties at any time of year; and divers berries. There are also succulent fruits and a few leafy vegetables, though the latter seem rarely used except as herbs. However, they are likened by the Mbuti to the village manioc top, which is cooked as a spinach, and perhaps it is because of the availability of manioc tops and their more pleasant taste that the indigenous vegetable is falling into disuse.

Among the net-hunters, gathering takes place during the course of the net-hunt, on the way to and from the hunt, and between each cast of the nets. Women carry baskets on their backs, with a bark tumpline over their foreheads, as do their young daughters. In the same way that the boys form an age group during the hunt, so do the girls. The boys split into two sections and guard each extremity of their hunting semicircle; likewise the girls split into two groups and beat at each end of the semicircle of beaters. Only the older boys and girls are expected to act as adults, and even they need not necessarily act with their parents. The girls go off on foraging parties on their own, and women go off in twos and threes to do their gathering. There is no recognizable kinship pattern, at least among the Epulu band, to these gathering associations. Women or girls who gather together are likely to be friends of approximately the same age; that is about the only generalization possible.

Men, not having baskets with them, are less able to gather effectively, but if they pass a bank of mushrooms they will pick whatever they can carry without encumbering themselves, and they will send the younger boys back to camp with their arms full.

Gathering, then, is a much more individual affair than hunting among the net-hunters. Even among the archers, where the women are not required on the hunt, they only go off in twos or threes to gather, and the same freedom is allowed for the men to gather whenever they have the opportunity. The spoils are similarly regarded much more as individual property than as communal, though sharing does take place.

There are no rituals and no magic associated with gathering, but insofar as it is primarily a woman's occupation, *elima* songs are frequently sung on gathering expeditions. As with hunting songs, the *elima* songs are designed to attract the attention of the forest deity,

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and since the forest is benevolent the songs thus are thought to secure protection. In point of fact they do, for the throaty chorus of even two or three Mbuti women is enough to scare away any game. When not singing the women beat their hands together, shout or talk loudly to each other, for the same purpose. I know of only one woman injured while gathering. She was alone, which was the first mistake, and the first question asked when news came back to camp that she had been attacked by a buffalo was the apparently surprising one, "Was she not singing?" She was not, nor was she "talking to the forest," and that was her second mistake, the consequence of which was death. The Mbuti are practical enough to recognize the "noise" value of song, but they see more in it than that.

When the Mbuti are near a source of plantation foods and can acquire them by one means or another, then their daily diet is largely vegetable. The meal taken before going hunting and the snack on the hunt are both likely to be entirely vegetarian, meat being eaten only at the evening meal. Even then it may be served with one or another vegetable. Even when the Mbuti are far away from a supply of village foods and living entirely on the forest they still rely heavily on vegetable foods, and gathering must be considered at least equally important with hunting as a subsistence activity. From what I was able to see, this is true among the archers as well as among the net-hunters. It is also true that throughout the forest the supply of forest vegetable foods, though varying, is constant and sufficient, frequently ample. If there is any time when there is a greater abundance than at other times, it is during the honey season.

HONEY

Falling approximately in the middle of our calendar year, and lasting a full two months, the honey season is of vital importance to the Mbuti not only from a nutritional point of view but structurally. We have already seen how at this time the net-hunting bands split up into minimal sections, separating hostile or factious elements and consolidating existing friendships, so that when the band re-forms it will have resolved most of the internal dissensions built up over the previous year, on the whole reaffirming old loyalties but always asserting some that are new. The archer band, normally segmented, joins together during the honey season in what is essentially the same process. It is significant that the honey season should be marked

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Two youths then take out the vines and shake them in all directions, liberally sprinkling anyone who happens to be standing by. Other youths are by now standing about, whistling on their honey whistles, a form of *madi* called *singbe*. The kindling is then stuck upright in the trenches, beside the *teka* vines, which have been replaced. Children help with this.

A hunter then places a single ember, apparently drawn from any fire, in a *mongongo* leaf and, having filled the center square with *mongongo* leaf stems, he places the coal on top. More kindling is added, crisscrossed much like a house of cards, each piece carefully placed by youths and hunters together. Without fanning, the kindling catches and a dense cloud of smoke is given off. An elder then brings over a bundle of old leaves that have been used for collecting honey, and places them near the fire. He waits until the smoke begins to dwindle, then directs the operation of placing the honey axes in the hearth, waiting for the blades to get warm and then using them to split some *toangbe* wood. The *toangbe* tree and the *tembu* tree are both good honey trees, but the *tembu* tree has to grow "old and fat" before it is favored by the bees.

Elders then carefully arrange the old leaves, adding more as necessary, in a large circle around the fire. Four *singbe* whistles are stuck in the ashes of the fire, pointing to the cardinals. While elders stand and shout, women gather and loudly clap their hands, and both hunters and youths kneel on the circle of leaves, facing in to the hearth, and begin pounding their fists rhythmically on the ground. The tempo increases to a maximum and is broken off with a sudden shout. This is repeated twice more, after which the hearth is abandoned and camp life resumes as though nothing had happened.

The Mbuti themselves are unable to give any satisfactory explanation of the performance, and it seems to combine elements of genuine magic (for they talk of the smoke attracting the bees and bringing honey to them) and of invocation of supernatural intervention (the *keti* are said to hear the pounding on the ground and will know that the Mbuti want honey). Whatever it may be thought to achieve, however, *angbe* (also *angbelu*) undoubtedly reiterates the division of the band into age groups, a division that is evident throughout the net-hunting season but is not so necessarily a part of activity during the honey season.

However regarded, Mbuti magic implies belief and is to that extent religious, no matter how much it may also be thought to have direct causal attributes, and the belief always supposes the benevolence of

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were, harm upon another. Masisi put it as well as it could be put when discussing Aberi's death (pp. 61–62), allegedly due to an Ngwana's use of sorcery. The circumstances were such—the three healthy "accused" all dying within such a short space of time following the curse—that there was a general discussion of village sorcery. There was disagreement of opinion as to whether or not it involved supernatural power, as claimed by the villagers. Most Mbuti stated bluntly that this was impossible, for such power was necessarily good. They held that the deaths had all been caused by poison. Others were not so sure. But the crux of the discussion was that whether caused by supernatural power or by poison, the action was not that of a man. Masisi said, "If you have a quarrel with a man you hit him with a wooden club, and he sees who hit him. You do not go and hide yourself and kill him with your thoughts."

While the Mbuti seek to remove themselves as far as possible from sorcery, feeling as though they were contaminated by it, their attitude to other associated supernatural beliefs of the villagers is quite different, being determined by different experience. A villager who has cursed one man may claim that the sickness of that man's distant cousin is a result of his curse, or that the falling of a tree that nearly killed the man's child was equally a result of the curse. These are not allegations that can be proved or disproved, and the Mbuti consequently have a somewhat ambivalent attitude toward sorcery; their disbelief is tinged, at least, by a reluctant suspicion.

However, the villagers also believe that there exist various malevolent spirits, sometimes spirits of sorcerers, and that these spirits have to be avoided, for there is no sure way of placating or propitiating them. Their abode is the forest, which to the villagers is the abode of all evil. Their powers are phenomenal and almost insuperable, avoidance being the only sure safeguard, ritual propitiation being enough to prevent the spirits from entering the village. Thus the forest is a place to be avoided on account of the spirits.

The Mbuti see two things very clearly. One is that such spirits simply do not exist in their forest, and the other is that this particular village belief deserves to be maintained for as long as it is effective in keeping villagers out of the forest. Consequently the Mbuti, who are great storytellers at all times, delight in stories—among themselves and in front of villagers—that enumerate the powers and horrors of such evil forest spirits. Sometimes the stories are of village origin, embellished by Mbuti imagination; sometimes they are pure

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Mbuti creations. But however much they enlarge upon the power and horror of the evil spirits, they always show that the Mbuti are not without power themselves, and the spirits are every now and again defeated and killed by Mbuti trickery. This confirms the village belief that the Mbuti are in fact in league with the spirits; just the fact that they coexist in the same forest is cited by many villagers as evidence of their affinity.

I cite two legends here (the KiBira versions of the same legends told by the same Mbuti are given in Appendix I[1], both of which show Mbuti ambivalence at its height. The first describes an Mbuti band in a village context (in a plantation) and pointedly refers to a myth that the Mbuti had bananas before the villagers. This is not generally believed to be true, but it is a way of expressing the undoubted prior occupation and ownership of the forest by the Mbuti. In this legend the Mbuti are threatened by a quasi-real enemy, the elephant. Elephants are indeed destructive to plantations and sometimes to Mbuti camps, but here, as seen at the end, the elephant is also a symbol for the villager (who is also destructive in his act of cutting down the forest). To rid themselves of the elephantine menace the Mbuti invent a story about evil spirits, making use of the knowledge that the elephant is basically stupid. When describing the elephant's fear of the spirits, the narrator comments, "Their fear was empty" (*"bachei ba bo"*), "for elephants are like villagers" (*"bambongu bua sopilabatu"*). The legend significantly ends with the promise that the narrator and his family will live happily forever after, but for "happily" the word *kobia* (more often, *ekimi*) is used. It means "quietly."

LEGEND OF THE MBUTI PLANTATION

In olden times we Mbuti had bananas before the people of the village. The people of the village stole bananas from us. We shared together, we Mbuti taking the leaves and the villagers taking the roots. They tricked us this way.

Our plantations of old were good, but the elephants used to bother us a lot. They killed many plantations. The Mbuti said, "What shall we do? The elephants are bothering us so much and are killing our plantations."

An old man, very old indeed, said, "When the elephants come again, we shall talk with them." The youths said, "What will you say?" The old man replied, "You shall see, children."

[1] [see page 301 -- Analyst]

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539 186 825 245 The elephants came. They began to kill all the bananas. They began to completely kill the plantation. The youths ran to the old man and said, "Oh, Father, the elephants have come again and are killing our plantation." [The old man said], "Good, I shall go and chat with them. All of you stay here, completely quiet."

The old man went to the plantation. He cried and cried. He threw himself on the ground. The elephants looked at him and said, "What thing is this? The youths have not come to chase us away, only an old Mbuti and he just cries. It is good, we shall eat quietly."

They ate many bananas, and the youths remained completely quiet in the camp. The old man cried greatly, "Oh, my children, all are dead. Oh, my children, where are they?"

The elephants heard, and said to the old man, "Why are you crying like that? And where are the youths? We shall eat up all the plantation." The old man replied, "Eat, eat it all. My children are all dead." And he continued crying.

539 186 825 245 796 The elephants said, "But you have many children. How did they die?" The old man said, "It was an evil spirit, very evil indeed. He walked with two spears.[3] He was very fat, like you. Every day I sent someone to cut bananas and the evil spirit ate him. Now he has eaten all my children. He said it was his plantation and that he would kill everyone who came here. Oh, my children have all died emptily. Why did the evil spirit not bother some other plantation, why did he curse mine?" He cried greatly and he left.

The elephants said, "Ha! If a spirit that bad has cursed this plantation, we should go somewhere else. Let us go quickly, before he kills us!"

Because elephants are like people of the village, and they are afraid of evil spirits. But they are afraid emptily. They went far. The old man called all his children and said, "Now the elephants will not come back. They think this is a place full of bad spirits. Thus we shall remain quiet. It is our plantation. Nobody else will bother us."

539 186 829 Although the scene is the plantation, thus asserting their claim to the plantations of the villagers, the Mbuti plainly are really referring

[765] [3] Evidently a feature that to the Mbuti convey a real fear of or respect for the supernatural, for in the morning rampages of the *molimo*, in its role as judge and when seeking Mbuti who are committing the crime of sleeping during the singing, the hunter acting the part carries a spear under each arm. See also in the second legend cited, where a spirit wanders through the night with two firebrands, which is the way in which the entrance of the *molimo* trumpet into the camp is often marked.

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to their forest sanctuary, and describing their tactics for keeping it free of bothersome, elephant-like villagers. Hunting is not mentioned; the two spears (and in the next legend the two firebrands) are uniquely related to the *molimo*, which, as is seen in the next chapter, offers major roles to the elders and the youths; precise age levels are specified in this legend. Thus the defense of the forest is considered as part of the role of the *molimo*. There is significantly no talk of a resort to magic or witchcraft or sorcery, and the mention of the evil spirits is accompanied by no belief in them.

In the second legend, however, the first part is a very straight description of exactly how an Mbuti might cheat a villager simply by concealing a portion of his honey, whereas the second part describes how the Mbuti is himself cheated. The second part alone could be taken as another way in which Mbuti explain to villagers why they have no meat or honey for them (see a third legend at the end of this chapter for such an example), but in this juxtaposition seems to indicate a certain belief that the Mbuti themselves might be cheated in this way.

LEGEND OF DOUBLE TRICKERY

I went to the forest to collect honey. I went, I went, I went. I went very far, beyond the big river [an indication of trespass, perhaps, making it a situation displeasing to the forest; hence the ultimate defeat of the Mbuti?]. I heard the sound of bees. Way up high I saw the place of the honey. I said, "Ha! Nobody has enclosed this tree with a vine; it is my tree, it is my honey."

I sharpened my ax, very sharp indeed. I cut a vine, I fanned up my fire and put the fire [smoking embers] in my basket. I began to climb. I climbed, I climbed, I climbed. The honey was very high up, it was real honey, not *apuma* [a special fermented honey]. I reached it. I fastened the vine and I sat. I put the fire [in a leaf cone] into the hole and I blew. Much smoke came and the bees ran away. I chopped, I chopped, I chopped. While I was cutting I heard someone walking below. "Ah! Who is walking below me? It is my master [*kpara*]. He heard me cutting [the adverse aspect of noise] and followed me."

I began to sing. I sang loudly. He called to me, but I pretended that I did not hear him. I sang and I chopped. I sang, "Ah! I am chopping out honey to give to my *kpara!*" And slowly I chopped out the honey. I got a lot of it. But I only put part of it in my basket. The

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539 222 571 439 rest I put in a place where the tree had two arms [i.e., in a fork]. I sang, "Ah! There is only a little honey, but I shall give it all to my *kpara*." I came down.

"Ah! My Mbuti, what are you doing here?" My *kpara* looks at the basket.

"Ah! My master. I came to search for my honey, but there is only a little of it. It is a bad year. It is heavy work. You must go back with my honey; if I get any more I shall come with it."

The *kpara* took my honey with him and returned to the village to say that he had eaten all my honey. His stupidity! [*Ndamdama nda'e!* or *Mbafu yaké!*] When he had gone I quickly climbed up above and I collected all the honey from the place I had put it, and I came down to return to the camp and share it with all my relatives. I walked, I walked, I walked. I arrived at the big river. Darkness began to come. I said, "Ha! Is night catching me in the middle of the forest like this? What shall I do?" I climbed up a big tree and lay there.

539 222 776 Halfway through the night I heard a sound and woke up. A little way off I saw two firebrands. "Ah! Who is walking in the middle of the night like that, with two firebrands? It is an evil spirit." I remained completely quiet. I heard a woman's voice. "Ah! My child, where is my child?" It was the voice of my grandmother, a very, very old woman. I was surprised. "Ha! Grandmother is looking for me in the middle of the night like this? Is it really my grandmother?"

"Ah! Where is my child? Either a leopard has caught him or he has lost the trail."

I remained quiet, but the two firebrands came right up underneath the tree. It was truly an evil spirit, but he had changed into my grandmother. I sneezed. "Ah! My child is up in the tree?"

"Yes, Grandmother. I am here. I was searching for honey, but darkness caught me on the trail."

"Oh, child, you have done badly, for when you did not return I thought you were dead and I left camp to search for you, and I have found you well. You have done very badly toward me. Give me my honey."

"Ah! Grandmother, it is very heavy. I shall carry it for you, I, myself. We shall return together."

"Nonsense! You are afraid of the night. You stay here. I shall return with my honey. Give it." I was afraid, because I knew it was an evil spirit. I threw some honey down. "Give me more, give me more." I threw down more. "Give me more."

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"There is no more, Grandmother." "Yes there is, give it, my bad child." I was very afraid. I threw it all down and said, "That is all, Grandmother, take it and go. There is no more. Take it and return to your place. I shall stay here."

"Thank you, my child, I shall return. Stay well."

"Go well, Grandmother."

I sat with eyes [i.e., watchfully] and waited for daylight. When daylight came I climbed down. I looked for the footprints of my grandmother. There were no footprints. "Ah!" I said. "It was truly an evil spirit. I did well to throw down all my honey, or it would have killed me completely."

That is why I returned empty-handed.

If in telling the stories the Mbuti do so to such good effect that they half convince themselves, they more than convince the villagers. The advantages of the situation to the Mbuti are as obvious as they are considerable. But at the same time it has to be pointed out that the forest itself is hostile to the villagers, and they have very real reason to dislike and fear it. It not only makes their life as cultivators hard and uncertain but it makes communication through the forest highly dangerous, to the extent that, until the road along which the villages are now eagerly clustered was built across the middle of the forest, the villages were very self-contained units with little intercommunication. Even now villagers will walk twice as far or more by road to reach another village, rather than take a simple shortcut across the forest. Unversed as they are in forest lore, its dangers are real to the villagers and there are frequent instances of villagers disappearing without trace even while on a relatively short trip. They are promptly added to the legion of forest spirits by their relatives, who have an even greater fear of the forest from then on.

The Mbuti, however, know the forest and its ways, and the dangers it has to offer are exceptionally few and far between. There is certainly nothing in the course of natural events in the forest to suggest to hunters and gatherers any trace of hostility. There is a great abundance of material goods, and of health and security, all of which suggest benevolence. This is taken up in the final section on the forest world, dealing with the religious life of the Mbuti.

One of the best examples of the kind of use to which the Mbuti put village beliefs that do not tally with their own is seen in the following legend (quoted in *The Forest People*, Chapter 7). It makes

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use of the village fear and respect for forest spirits, but it also makes use of the village love for asserting their superiority and their paternalism. It even makes use of the village concept of kinship obligations, and the respect and obedience owed to a grandmother.

The occasion on which the legend was told was the return of Cephu to the camp, after a short absence in the village, laden down with village foods. It was known that he had gone empty-handed, and it was equally known that he was not on good enough terms with any of the villagers to get such a handout for nothing, that he was too lazy to have worked for reward and too wary of pursuit to steal. However, theft seemed the only answer, so he was asked from whom he had stolen the food. Always a great dramatist, Cephu told the following story in answer, and it quickly became a favorite.

"I am only a poor Mbuti; the forest is my father and my mother. But my village master asked me for meat, so I hunted and I hunted and I hunted. I caught *sondu* and *lendu* and *mboloko* and *sindula*, and I cut them all up and dried them carefully. When they were nice and dry I wrapped the meat in fresh *mongongo* leaves and put it all in my basket and set off for the village."

This much everyone knew to be completely false, but the implied ridicule of the villagers who would believe it was not lost.

"But on the way I saw a bad spirit coming toward me. I tried to escape but he caught up with me and demanded the meat. I said, 'No, this is for my master. I cannot give it to you. You may take all my own food, but not this meat—that is for my beloved master.' But the spirit was not to be put off, and I had to fight with him. Finally I managed to escape because I am strong, and a great hunter, and I ran on toward the village as fast as I could. Spirits are very bad things to fight. They would kill any villager; only we Mbuti can deal with them. But then I saw the spirit again, and this time he was more clever than I, and he changed into my grandmother.

"'A'i, Cephu, where are you going with all that meat?' she asked me.

"Now, my grandmother died many years ago and I had to be polite to her. So I told her I was taking it to my beloved master. But she got angry and demanded it, asking if I would refuse it to her, an Mbuti, my own grandmother, and bring it to a villager. I pleaded with her and begged her, telling her how good my master always was to me and how hungry he was for meat. But she snatched the basket from me,

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and because she was my grandmother I could not strike her or stop her, and she ran off down the trail.

"As she was running she changed into a spirit again so that she could run faster, and as soon as my grandmother was a spirit once more I could fight, so I fought and fought, and the spirit nearly killed me, and he went off in the manner of spirits and left me with nothing, not even my basket.

"When I came to the village I was crying because I had nothing to offer my master, and when my master asked me what was wrong I told him this story. He was terribly sorry because he knew what dreadful lives we Mbuti lead, surrounded by all these bad spirits. He said if it was not for the spirits he would come into the forest and hunt himself, but everyone knows how dangerous the spirits are to villagers. Then I asked him if I could have some rice, as I had lost all my own food as well as his. He said, 'Of course, my poor Mbuti. You have tried to help your master, and you can't help it if you are just an Mbuti and have to live among all those dreadful spirits.'

"So he gave me the rice and plantains and I came away happy. How kind the villagers are to their 'poor Mbuti'!"

Such stories are legion, being told by the Mbuti almost every time they are questioned by the villagers as to why they have brought no meat. They are equally, if not even more frequently, told, however, in the forest hunting camps, and are part of the constant effort of the Mbuti to affirm at all times the distinction between the two worlds, the forest and the village. Magic, witchcraft, sorcery and the belief in forest spirits are all turned to the same effect, among others, and combine to keep the worlds apart not only in theory but also in practice.

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nor does the usage of one band necessarily coincide with the usage of another band.

The divers aspects of spiritual power that are generally recognized are as follows:

Each man and each animal (and according to most Mbuti, even the inanimate and vegetable worlds) is endowed to a greater or lesser extent with such power.

This power derives from a single source whose physical manifestation is the forest itself. Opinion differs as to whether this means the vegetable forest, or the forest totality, including the Mbuti themselves. Again there is a multiplicity of names to represent this single power source, and it is most easily translated simply as "the forest" (*ndura*), for this is ultimately how the Mbuti themselves describe it.

Also deriving from the prime source of spiritual power are certain disembodied spirits which, like the Mbuti, inhabit the forest. Their existence, for all practical purposes, does not impinge upon that of the Mbuti; they have no power to harm or help, though there is a vague belief that there might be a conflict of interests at times, and any unexplained mishap may be explained in this way. The disembodied spirits are generally thought of as living much the same kind of existence as the Mbuti, for as they themselves say, what other kind of existence can there be in the forest? Thus, someone who trips while chasing an animal may say he collided with a *keti* (the term used by the Epulu Mbuti for this disembodied spirit as well as for the more generalized spiritual power) who was chasing the same animal. The mysterious absence of game in an unhunted area is explained by saying that the *keti* must have hunted it out. But there is no sense of competition or rivalry, and the *keti* are thought about only when such explanations are needed.

The Mbuti also believe in individual personality, which is essentially of the body rather than of the spirit, but which is enhanced and activated by the spirit. This enables individuals to speak with conviction and to justify their actions or thoughts by saying that their "heart" is pleased, for the heart is generally considered the location of this personality, which when displeased jumps and leaps about inside the chest.

The same five terms, all of which may be used to denote the general concept of personal force, do, however, also have individual and particular meanings by which we can perceive something more of the system of belief of the Epulu Mbuti.

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PEPO

The life force that animates all moving, living things, without which they would be mere vegetable growths, unable to move or think. The word *pepo* also has connotations of air and wind, and breathing is thought of as a manifestation of *pepo*. A gale of wind, then, is interpreted by some Mbuti as the breath of the forest itself (*pepo nde ndura*), as the breath of the disembodied spirits, or *keti* (*pepo nde baketi*).

KETI

Disembodied spirits, human and animal, who are not necessarily the spirits of the dead but may be independent manifestations of the forest, and who are disembodied only in that they are invisible to the Mbuti. They have an existence otherwise comparable to that of the Mbuti, and are likewise animated by *pepo*. There is no conflict of interests between them and the Mbuti, though occasionally the two worlds inadvertently become confused. An Mbuti may be in hot pursuit of an animal that suddenly disappears; he is likely to say that it must have been *keti*. An animal mysteriously drops dead; it was killed by a *keti* hunter (*keti a mu'e*) who thought he was in pursuit of a *keti* animal. Hallucinations and dreams are primarily the result of accidentally slipping from the one world into the other. All such meetings of *keti* and Mbuti are regarded as abnormal, and are never deliberately sought. They do not exactly induce fear, but there is undeniably the belief that one might cross over so effectively that one would never come back. The Mbuti say that if this happened you might not even know you had crossed over, which indicates that they conceive of the *keti* world as a mirror of their own.[1] Dreams, then, do not convey authority as being divine portents but, being real experience of a mirror world, they are, like all experiences, to be learned from. Thus Ambosu dreamed constantly that he was singing into the *molimo* trumpet. This did not give him the right to take up this role,

[1] On two occasions I heard *ekokomea* described laughingly as a dance of the *keti*. The dance, involving a reversal of the sexes, is primarily associated with the *molimo*, hence with the spirit and supernatural world. There is a hunting dance in which there is a rapid succession of changes in direction, the hunters becoming the hunted and vice versa. Yet another instance of Mbuti recognition of reversal is seen in the legend of the Mbuti plantation (see Chapter 12), in which the Mbuti are the cultivators threatened by the animals of the forest (elephants), who undoubtedly represent the villagers.

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but everyone agreed that it was a clear indication that he should try. He became the leading trumpet singer, then, not through divine choice but simply through his experience in the *keti* world. He was not regarded as more spiritual, merely as more experienced. However, insofar as both Mbuti and *keti* derive their *pepo* from the forest, if the forest wills them to hunt together in the same time and place then the mirror images coincide exactly and it is, indeed, a "strong" hunt. Such coincidence is exhausting, however, and it is not something actively wished for except, possibly, in times of particularly poor hunting. Ideally the Mbuti and the *keti* should follow each other closely, but always remain just slightly apart.

BORU

A rather difficult concept of the "house" (*endu*—the same word as for a hut) inhabited by *pepo*. The human and animal body of flesh and blood is, in a sense, *boru*, and so is the invisibility of the *keti*. It is a term seldom used, but the concept affords a firm basis for a code of respect for the body, abuse or mutilation of which may drive away the *pepo*, causing "death" (which for the Mbuti is simply the departure of *pepo* and its return to the forest or the world of *keti*). Thus physical violence as a means of settling a dispute is abhorred as a sacrilege. A sound thrashing is perfectly in order, but any violence that produces blood causes an opening through which *pepo* may escape. For although associated with air and wind and thus with breath, it is not thought of as *being* any of these things, and its exact means of escape is unknown. The bodily apertures are all regarded as requiring attention, however, as possible avenues. It might be pointed out here that insofar as *pepo* is associated with life and may escape through these apertures, this is perfectly consistent with the Mbuti recognition of the sexual act as a means of conveying life, though they do not explicitly refer to semen as *pepo*. It is also consistent with the variations on the sexual act found in the *ekokomea* dance, where not only are the sexes reversed but attention is drawn to the less usual apertures, to be somewhat delicate. The role of *ekokomea* as a major feature of the death festival becomes immediately more understandable, its burlesque form allowing for the stated antipathy of the Mbuti to the unproductive forms of sexual perversion *ekokomea* so graphically depicts.

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ROHO

The personality of the individual dies with the body and is the combination of a particular *boru* and *pepo*. It is associated with the heart and is spoken of as being hot or cold, sometimes as noisy or quiet. Hot and noisy are generally bad qualities, cool and quiet are good. But properly controlled heat and noise can be useful, though dangerous, for both are sometimes thought of as being "strong." The state of an individual's *roho* may be cited as justification for his actions, and nobody can gainsay him, for it is bad to go against one's *roho*. However, a man or woman who is constantly calling on his or her *roho* to justify antisocial acts such as laziness or quarrelsomeness may be said to have a bad *roho*, and will be shunned.

SATANI (also *Shaitani*)

This is a concept derived from the villagers, and is for the Mbuti more in the realm of folklore than belief, for *satani* are, to the villagers, malevolent and dangerous forest spirits. The Mbuti use the term in this sense only when recounting a village tale or a tale concerning villagers, for they essentially disbelieve in such evil spirits. However, they sometimes use the term, particularly if talking in Ngwana (to which language it belongs), as synonymous with *keti*. An additional complication: When talking in Bira, they may use *keti* (a Bira word) in the sense of the village Bira, which is the same as the Ngwana *satani*, or evil spirits. However, in the forest context there is no concept of *keti* or *satani* as conceived by the villager, the only spirits being the *keti* as described above, invisible mirror images of the Mbuti themselves, no better and no worse. (Conversely, in the village world all the spirits of the forest are malevolent and dangerous; there is no concept parallel to that of the Mbuti concept of forest spirit.)

THE GODHEAD

As the Mbuti themselves strenuously refuse to admit there is any sense in trying to describe what we here call "the godhead" unless you have seen it, there is not much sense in our trying to do so. Rather, by looking at various aspects of Mbuti life we can discern the exis-

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tence of a belief in such a spiritual being, and its nature as being generally that of "the forest." From the foregoing description of the two levels of existence, human and *keti*, and of the generally accepted principle of spiritual animation, it is plain that there should be a source of such spiritual force. The mobility of the Mbuti, the composite nature of the bands and the frequency of interchange between bands all lead to a confused scattering of the various terms that appear in the village religious systems. I have been utterly unable to discern any pattern in which the godhead is divided into entities concerned with different aspects of Mbuti life, each with a distinct name; e.g., a god of the hunt known by one name, a god of the bush known by another, and so forth. Even within any one band it seemed singularly clear that there is only one godhead, though different individuals in that band may well use different names.[2] The forest *is* that godhead (*ndura nde kalisia*, or *ndura nde mungu*), rather than being thought of merely as its abode; hence the sanctity of the forest, and the profanity of anything that is not of the forest. That this is so is seen in the almost universal answer given when faced, either among themselves in the course of discussion or directly, by the question of where *pepo* derives from. The answer is that it derives from the forest itself (*pepo a kidi suba ndura*). Not just the trees or streams, or the sky or the soil, but from the totality, down to the last grain of sand.

We have shown earlier how the Mbuti frequently sing and shout to the forest, addressing it as "father" or "mother." They also sometimes address it as "friend," or even "lover." They are perfectly well able to explain this, for they say that "the forest is everything"

[2] Schebesta (1952, 303) says that the Basua (net-hunters) refer to the divinity as *mungu*, *keti*, *kalisia*, and *songé*. I have found all these terms used, but without any different significance in the forest context, while they each have a special and separate significance among the villagers. The important point is that Schebesta recognizes that the divinity "loves" the Mbuti, who owe everything to him, while the villagers are afraid of him. Here I believe Schebesta to have come across the forest as it is considered by the Mbuti in the evening *molimo*, the source of all good. In discussing the archer concept of the divinity, Schebesta (1952, 305–6) refers to the different visualizations they have of *toré*, frequently ugly, noisy and menacing. I found these same interpretations of *toré* among the archers, but always in reference to the other aspect of the forest, not as the mother provider but as the father lawgiver. Among the net-hunters, when the morning *molimo* comes into camp to wreak havoc, it is greeted with cries of *e téré, e téré*, it being openly agreed that this was a form of the archer word *toré* and referred only to this aspect of the *molimo*. But my informants would add, "It is all the same thing, it is all the forest." Schebesta's description of *toré* not only corresponds to a different aspect of the Mbuti *molimo*, but it also corresponds closely to the description given by Vergiat (1936, 53–7) of the "génie de la brousse" among the Ubangi villagers, to the northwest. Here, as by the Lesé/Efe, that divinity is described as a grotesque caricature of an Mbuti, fearful to all villagers but strangely friendly to the Mbuti hunters.

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(*ndura nde bokbu*), and if pressed begin to enumerate the totality of their experience. Primarily, however, they refer to the forest as mother or father, according to context. On the hunt the men address it as father, the women as mother. A man receiving a sudden unexpected favor, as he sees it (coming across a cache of highly prized mushrooms), is apt to address the forest as mother. A woman who is having a hard time finding the leaves or saplings she wants will, getting into a tangle of undergrowth, almost certainly start addressing the forest as father and accuse it of being far too severe and strict. The terms are so widely and frequently used that I have no means of saying which is the more prevalent. If anything, I would hazard a guess that "mother" is used more often than "father." The Mbuti themselves say that which term they use and when is a matter for their *roho*.

The extent to which the Mbuti personify the forest is seen when in explanation they say that the forest gives them not only food and shelter, warmth and clothing, but also affection (*ndura pisasu bendu, pisasu isa, pisasu ngombe*; *ndura ekondisu*). The intimacy of the relationship between the individual Mbuti and his forest godhead is most plainly seen in the incident described more fully in *The Forest People* (Chapter 15), where a youth was found dancing all by himself in the moonlight, singing a wordless song as he danced. When questioned as to why he was dancing alone, he answered, "I am not dancing alone, I am dancing with the forest, dancing with the moon."[3]

3 *Kanga me bi akilé: me bi na ndura, me bi na songé.*

Schebesta (1952, 303) refers to *songé* (moon) as being one of the net-hunting names for God, regarded as the creator of all things (1952, 305), particularly of man, which *songé* creates by means of menstrual blood. He does not, unfortunately, give more information or documentation on this interpretation, but there is no doubt that the moon is, to the Mbuti, an object of interest and (as seen above) affection, and at the same time in common discussion they do connect the moon with menstruation, and menstruation with fertility. I have myself not come across any instance of the moon being worshipped as such, unless this moonlight dance be regarded as worship, except in one song of the *molimo*, the words of which were:

Ema songé, ema, ema; okiru ema; pika'i.
Mother moon, mother, mother, hear us mother; come.

This is remarkably similar to a translation given by Bowra (1962, 70) of a song of the Gabon pygmies cited by Trilles (1945, 157).

Moon, O mother moon, O mother moon,
mother of living things,
Hear our voice, O mother moon!
O, mother moon, O mother moon,
Keep away the spirits of the dead,
Hear our voice, O mother moon,
O mother moon, O mother moon.

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Mbuti

widely practiced in the mimetic hunting dances, by which it may be supposed that the dancer is trying, magically, to influence the action and movement of the game. In this light the Mbuti acceptance of the *nkumbi* seems more plausible, as a "magical" means of gaining power over the villagers. It is not entirely unlike the situation described by Beattie (1960, p. 78) for Nyoro reactions to foreign powers such as Europeans, Polish expatriates, and airplanes. The Nyoro attempt was to gain some control over the situation by becoming possessed by the spirits of these foreign powers.

There may also be a certain amount of seepage of village beliefs into the Mbuti subconscious, despite the formidable structural opposition they have raised to all such influences. There is certainly cause to think that the village beliefs of witchcraft and sorcery, confused as they are by the Mbuti, nonetheless have for them a certain sinister ring of conviction.[9]

It is perhaps for that reason that the only plainly discernible symbolism evident in Mbuti ritual is concerned with life. Of all the oppositions between the forest and the village, such as abundance/hunger, unity/disunity, moral/immoral, equal/unequal, cool/hot, song/silence, quiet/noise, the most significant are undoubtedly the last two, for silence and noise are associated ultimately with death. If the Mbuti suspect there are, in the village, supernatural powers with which they should come to terms, it is for purposes of defense. And they see their major defense in the power of their own supernatural, the forest.

Their desire is to counteract the forces of hunger, disunity, immorality, inequality, heat, silence and noise, forces that amount to death for the Mbuti. Their focus of attention is on the preservation and continuation of life. The relatively simple ritual, if it can truly be called that, of the *molimo* festival is supercharged with an emotional concern, a burning desire, for life. As might be expected, it reinforces those aspects of Mbuti society that require constant attention: age divisions are clearly symbolized in the three fires for the three upper age groups; the value of sharing (on nonlineal grounds!) is emphasized in the technical division of the songs, again bringing in division along age lines and demanding close cooperation; the reluctance to share is symbolized at the same time as the friction between youths

[9] Again, a linguistic study might help greatly, not only through separating institutions and concepts that derive from different tribes, but in revealing the location of hidden areas of forest/village opposition. Unfortunately we still lack any published studies of KiNgwana, KiBira and KiLesé, let alone of the divers Mbuti groups.

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Mbuti

ahe me daphi umana'o, me bu boki ngbokbu, kumande me pisibi.
I quickly climbed up again, I took all the honey from the place where I had put it.

me timi ya dodo a sia n'apa a kapa banama bame.
I came down to return to the camp and shared it with everyone.

me tambi, me tambi, me tambi. me kidi apua libo mangbo.
I walked, I walked, I walked, I arrived at the big river.

tokwaba a wanzi piha. me lufu. "ha! tudu a me pedi a me mandula? me ato mabo!"
Darkness began to settle. I said, "Ha! Is night catching me in the middle of the forest like this? What shall I do?"

me daphi kua me mangbo, me langi neko.
I climbed up into a big tree, I lay there.

ame mangondo moki liso. me oni kurahwa isu ebaré.
Halfway through the night I heard a sound and woke. I saw far away two firebrands.

"mondoa na tamba kifa, na isu ebara benda? nde ketiba!"
"Who is walking in the middle of the night, with two firebrands? It is an evil spirit!"

me kobi nengo. m'oki liso kali.
I remained completely quiet. I heard a woman's voice.

"a miki mamo, miki mamo, miki mamo mu ma?" liso a tata, mozee nengo.
"Ah! My child, my child; where is my child?" It was the voice of my grandmother, a very old person.

me moboki nengo. "Ah! tatamua kaba me amamangondo? nde tata mamo nengo?"
I was very afraid. "Ah! My grandmother is looking for me in the middle of the night like this? Is it really my grandmother?"

"ah miki mamo mu ma? ou moli a pedi, ou a bangi?"
"Ah! Where is my child? Either a leopard has caught him or he has lost his way?"

me kobi nengo, akini isu ebaré akidi tina me.
I kept quiet completely, but the two firebrands came right up underneath the tree.

nde keti nengo, akini akoaki tatamamo.
It was truly an evil spirit, but it had turned into my grandmother.

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Mbuti

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me tuni kisio. "*Ah! miki mamo anua neko?*"
I sneezed. "Ah! My child is up in the tree?"

"*ɛ'i tata, me mu be'i. me ka bi boki tudaba a me pedi a phe.*"
"Yes, Grandmother, I am here. I was searching for honey but darkness caught me on the trail."

"*Ah! miki, ue muni sinama. ue a bia sinia abende neku, me toli akaba'o; me tondi mota'o. ue si sinama nango. pisa boki ndamo.*"
"Ah! Child, you have done badly. When you did not return, I thought you were dead and I left to search for you; I found you strong. You have done very badly towards me. Give me my honey."

"*ah! tata, nde tida'i; me kumbandi sania kumekadi.*"
"Ah! Grandmother, it is very heavy. I shall carry it for you, we shall return together."

"*mbe, uache todahwa; ue lika ma. me sia na boki ndamo. pikisa.*"
"Nonsense, you are afraid of the night. You stay here. I shall return with the honey. Give it."

me cha'i nango gunde me upi a bi keti.
I was very afraid, because I knew it was an evil spirit.

me maka boki na dodo. "*pikasa ndetina, pikasa ndetina.*"
I threw some honey down. "Give me more, give me more."

me maka ndetina. "*pikasa ndetina.*"
I threw down more. "Give me more."

"*ndetina a maanda, tata.*" "*mbe, pikisa, miki masinama.*"
"There is no more, Grandmother." "Nonsense, give, my bad child."

me cha'i nango, me maka bokbui me lufu:
I was very afraid, I threw it all down; I said:

"*a ngbokisu, tata, be'a, ue ke, ndetina amaanda. peda ue sia nda'o. me lika oma.*"
"That is all, Grandmother, take it, you go, there is no more. Take it and return to your place. I shall remain here."

"*ebo. nda bongo'i, miki mamo. me aki a'o. ue likato.*"
"Good. It is good, my child. I shall return. You stay on."

"*ue kato'e, tata.*"
"Go then, Grandmother."

me liki na nio, me bonji mana. mana a piki, me simia a dodo.
I sat with eyes, I waited for daylight. When daylight came I climbed down to the ground.

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Mbuti

me ka bi anga batu; anga munda.
I looked for footprints of humans. There were no footprints.

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"Ah!" me lufu, "nde keti mabobo. me si ndanza me ka boki bokbu. a bia mua me nengo."
"Ah!" I said, "It was an evil spirit, truly. I did well to throw down all my honey. It would have killed me completely."

akini, gunde me sibo.
But, empty-handed I return.

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Mbuti

765 more. The men continued singing for about another hour, but as
533 by then Cephu and the rest of his family had gone inside their huts,
[534] they stopped abruptly and returned to the main camp.

The next evening the singing was around a fire in the middle of the main camp. After all, the molimo was Njobo's, and Cephu just went to sleep, so why should we go to his camp? A few men from Cephu's family came over, but not Cephu. The singing went on for about four hours, but the molimo did not appear again. The third night it was the same, except that nobody turned up from Cephu's camp.

[858] I thought this a little strange and asked Moke about it. He said that normally one would not call out the molimo for a child; that was why nobody was really enthusiastic, but Cephu had insisted. Besides, the molimo should only be in the forest, not so close to a Negro village. It was all right to sing molimo songs as long as there were no Negroes about, but even then it was not good to sing them
• [192] near a village. The molimo itself, however, should come out only in the forest, where it belonged, and there was a lot of work attached, as it had to be given food to eat, water to drink, and fire to keep it warm. He stopped there and could not be persuaded to go any further. He just waved his hands in the air and said emphatically that this molimo was empty, meaningless, a farce.

765 At the end of a week the mourning period prescribed by the Ne-
177 groes was over; the women, who were meant to wail at sunrise, noon
186 and sunset, stopped wailing. A relative of Cephu's Negro "master" had come over to the village the night before, and the men had had a final burst of singing for him, but with their tongues in their cheeks. Moke told me not to think that this was a real molimo; it was what they did for the villagers to make them think their molimo was the same as the Pygmies'. The villagers also make use of a musical instrument called the *molimo*, but it is meant to represent the

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But, most important, he told me, or rather showed me, how the Pygmies believe in the goodness of the forest. "The forest is a father and mother to us," he said, "and like a father or mother it gives us everything we need—food, clothing, shelter, warmth . . . and affection. Normally everything goes well, because the forest is good to its children, but when things go wrong there must be a reason."

I wondered what he would say now, because I knew that the village people, in times of crisis, believe that they have been cursed either by some evil spirit or by a witch or sorcerer. But not the Pygmies; their logic is simpler and their faith stronger, because their world is kinder.

Moke showed me this when he said, "Normally everything goes well in our world. But at night when we are sleeping, sometimes things go wrong, because we are not awake to stop them from going wrong. Army ants invade the camp; leopards may come in and steal a hunting dog or even a child. If we were awake these things would not happen. So when something big goes wrong, like illness or bad hunting or death, it must be because the forest is sleeping and not looking after its children. So what do we do? We wake it up. We wake it up by singing to it, and we do this because we want it to awaken happy. Then everything will be well and good again. So when our world is going well then also we sing to the forest because we want it to share our happiness."

All this I had heard before, but I had not realized quite so clearly that this was what the molimo was all about. It was as though the nightly chorus were an intimate communion between a people and their god, the forest. Moke even talked about this, but when he did so he stopped working on his bow and turned his wrinkled old face to stare at me with his deep, brown, smiling eyes. He told me how all Pygmies have different names for their god, but how they all know that it is really the same one. Just what it is, of course, they don't know, and that is why the name really does not matter very

[i.e. Moke - analyst]

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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much. "How can we know?" he asked. "We can't see him; perhaps only when we die will we know and then we can't tell anyone. So how can we say what he is like or what his name is? But he must be good to give us so many things. He must be of the forest. So when we sing, we sing to the forest."

The complete faith of the Pygmies in the goodness of their forest world is perhaps best of all expressed in one of their great molimo songs, one of the songs that is sung fully only when someone has died. At no time do their songs ask for this or that to be done, for the hunt to be made better or for someone's illness to be cured; it is not necessary. All that is needful is to awaken the forest, and everything will come right. But suppose it does not, suppose that someone dies, then what? Then the men sit around their evening fire, as I had been doing with them for the past month, and they sing songs of devotion, songs of praise, to wake up the forest and rejoice it, to make it happy again. Of the disaster that has befallen them they sing, in this one great song, "There is darkness all around us; but if darkness *is*, and the darkness is of the forest, then the darkness must be good."

As Moke looked at me and spoke I wondered if this was how he had once explained things to his own son. Now I began to understand what happened at night when fifteen feet of drainpipe was carried into the camp and someone blew or sang into it; and I began to understand what the "presence" was—it was surely the presence of the Forest itself, in all its beauty and goodness.

Moke turned back to his bow and began whittling again.

"You will soon see things of which you have never heard, and which you have never seen. Then you will understand things that I can never tell you. But you must stay awake—you may see them only once."

He started humming to himself, and I left.

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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at the trees and opened his arms and raised his expressive hands upward. He began telling the story in his beautiful rich voice, the seriousness of what he was saying belied only by the smile that lurked in the depths of his shining brown eyes.

"I am only a poor BaMbuti; the forest is my father and my mother. But my Negro master had asked me to bring him some meat." So Cephu started, self-deprecating, using the term for his patron in the sense in which only the Negroes use it, as indicating ownership. The Pygmies accept this assumption of superiority outwardly, because it pays—as the story went on to show.

"My master asked me for meat, so I hunted and I hunted and I hunted, and I caught sondu and lendu and mboloko and sindula, and I cut them all up and dried them carefully. When they were nice and dry I wrapped the meat in fresh mongongo leaves and put it all in my basket and set off for the village. But on the way I saw a bad spirit coming toward me. I tried to escape but he caught up with me and demanded the meat. I said, 'No, this is for my master. I cannot give it to you. You may take all my own food, but not this meat—that is for my beloved master.' But the spirit was not to be put off, and I had to fight with him. Finally I managed to escape, because I am strong and a great hunter, and I ran on toward the village as fast as I could. Spirits are very bad things to fight. They would kill any villager; only we Pygmies can deal with them. But then I saw the spirit again and this time he was more clever than I, and he changed into my grandmother. 'A'i, Cephu! Where are you going with all that meat?' she asked me. Now my grandmother died many years ago and I had to be polite to her. So I told her I was taking it to my beloved master. But she got angry and demanded it, asking if I would refuse it to her, a Pygmy, my own grandmother, and bring it to a villager? I pleaded with her and begged her, telling her how good my master always was to me, and how hungry he was for meat. But she snatched the basket from me, and because she was my

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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538 grandmother I could not strike her or stop her, and she ran off down
439 the trail.
177
996 "As she was running she changed into a spirit again so that she could run faster, and as soon as my grandmother was a spirit once more I could fight, so I fought and fought, and the spirit nearly killed me, and he went off in the manner of spirits and left me with nothing, not even my basket.

"When I came to the village I was crying because I had nothing to offer my master, and when my master asked me what was wrong I told him this story. He was terribly sorry because he knows what dreadful lives we BaMbuti lead, surrounded by all these bad spirits.
[186] He said if it was not for the spirits he would come into the forest and hunt himself, but everyone knows how dangerous the spirits are to villagers. Then I asked him if I could have some rice as I had lost all my own food as well as his. He said, 'Of course, my poor Pygmy, you have tried to help your master, and you can't help it if you are just a Pygmy and have to live among all those dreadful spirits.'

"So he gave me rice and plantains and I came away happy. How kind the villagers are to their poor Pygmies!"

[186] Every time Cephu tells this story it brings knowing smiles to the faces of all who listen, because every "poor Pygmy" has some trick such as Cephu's, by which he twists his "master" around his little finger and at the same time heightens the fear of the villagers for the forest by constantly repeating stories of imaginary spirits and dread dangers.

538 This story, as often happened, set off another. Old Asofalinda,
177 Ekianga's sister, was not to be outdone. She described how she had cut down a fine stalk of plantains outside the village but was surprised in the act by the owner. She just had time to push the plantains into a hole in the ground at the foot of the tree. The villager asked what she was doing there, and what she was putting in the
[996] hole. "Oh, master," she replied, "there was a dreadful dangerous

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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spirit-animal and he was going to attack you so I drove him into the hole and I dare not leave it or he will come out and kill you! Run and get your spear and save me, your poor Pygmy!" The villager was scared out of his wits and ran away. Asofalinda promptly hid the plantains elsewhere and quickly returned to the hole.

At this point in the story, Masamba, Njobo's wife, came to help act out the rest. Asofalinda crouched at the foot of a tree, pretending that she was covering a hole in the ground, and Masamba, acting the part of the villager, crept onto the scene, carrying a spear and looking very frightened. As they acted the scene, the villager came up behind Asofalinda and asked timidly if the spirit-animal was still there. "Yes," said Asofalinda, over her shoulder. "But I have used my magic and sung it to sleep so that you will be able to kill it. But you must be very quiet and very careful. You are the only one who could do it, you are so big and strong and clever, not like we poor Pygmies."

Saying this, she slowly uncovered the hole and whispered to the villager to stoop down and peer in. Masamba then cautiously bent over and peered into the imaginary hole. "No," said Asofalinda, "you will have to look deeper. It is a big hole and the spirit-animal is right at the back. But you must be very quiet or it will wake up and kill you first." So Masamba stooped lower and Asofalinda finished the scene with no further commentary. It was hardly necessary. She crept behind Masamba and kicked her heartily in the backside, and ran off laughing and clapping her hands with mirth. Even Masamba, who suffered the brunt of the joke, enjoyed it so much that the two of them re-enacted it four times that one afternoon.

In ways like this, even on a rainy day when there is no hunting or gathering to be done, a camp can be made lively and entertaining. But generally rain brings depression. People sit in their huts and peer out miserably. On the whole, however, the tenor of life is even, wet

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
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But at the central fireplace there was always a basket of food, showing that it was a kumamolimo, the only outward indication that the God of the Forest had been invoked and was waiting silently nearby, in the trees or in the Lelo itself, ready to enter the camp at night and join his people in their songs of joy and praise. The casual observer might have thought the youngsters were playing a game when they went around from hut to hut with a fishing line and a basket, collecting food from everyone. There was certainly nothing about their demeanor to indicate that this was an essential part of a great act of communion. And if the same observer were told that this was so, he would probably form the opinion that the molimo, whatever it was, could not mean very much if it was treated so lightly and casually.

This, in fact, is the opinion of the villagers. For them the ritual act is the important thing. In their religious rites it is the correct performance of the ceremonial that counts most. If correctly performed it is bound to bring the desired results, regardless of the accompanying thought, if indeed there is any. All attention is focused on the act itself. And it must not only be performed correctly, but with a solemnity that betrays fear.

The difference between the two attitudes is perhaps one of those fine shades of difference that divide magic from religion, though there is so much overlapping that they can seldom be divided in practice. Whereas the villagers believe that the act itself brings about results in a way they cannot explain, which is what we call magic, the BaMbuti do not believe this at all. They believe in a benevolent deity or supernatural power which they identify with the forest. To this they owe as much respect and affection and consideration as they owe to their own parents, and from it they can expect the same in return. So, for the Pygmies, it is not so much the act itself that counts, or the manner in which the act is performed, but the thought that goes with it. The collecting of food from hut to hut is not a

3t Turnbull E-5 (1951-1956) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

either a pith helmet decorated with gennet skin, or else a long-haired wig of monkey fur. In his hand he carried a metal walking stick that had once been the handle and stem of an umbrella. Sometimes he wore the gennet skin around his waist, or tucked into his belt, or hung from his neck. It was the symbol of his ritual authority, and it contained the charms from which he derived his power. Generally Sabani was a kindly and gentle man, wise and good. But his loyalties were narrow, confined to his own kin and a few friends. Beyond that circle he was a man to be feared rather than trusted.

Eboyo also had its Pygmy village, not far from the main village, but Sabani preferred to keep his Pygmies in the forest where the administration could not see what they were doing. Generally they were tending illicit plantations, of hemp among other things. Sabani also had his own still, where he used to have a powerful spirit made from manioc. He was frequently drunk but never incapable. At all times he was an imposing and commanding figure. In his village there were some thirty families, including Kapamba's. Camp Putnam and Dar es Salaam were about half that size.

The attitude of all these villagers to the forest was the same. They made their villages as open as possible, and they built their houses without any windows. They tried to ignore the world around them, because for them the forest was hostile, something to be feared and fought. Even after cutting it down there was the constant labor required to keep it from growing back. It was filled with evil spirits that cursed the soil so that although it would bear gigantic mahogany trees it would produce only the most meager fruits for the villagers.

The tribes of this area had once been plains dwellers, with herds of cattle, living in the friendly open spaces of East Africa. When they were driven into the forest by more powerful tribes, they brought as much of their plains culture with them as they could. But their cattle died off, and they had to live by cultivation alone. They

3c Turnbull E-5 (1951-1956) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4-Mbuti
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made his way painfully to join the other boys, all sitting in a line on logs. Immediately after being cut they are made to sit down and join the others in singing one of the many work songs they will have to learn during the coming months. This takes their mind off the pain, which is all the more considerable because after the operation the wound is wrapped in a leaf containing a native medicine that is full of salt. Kaoyo was very roughly handled, and Masalito ran up to him and put his arms around him, hugging him tight to give him strength. The villagers howled with laughter, but Masalito was more concerned with Kaoyo than with them.

Not long afterward the boys were made to dance, and then put to rest on a special bed made of split logs, laid side by side on a rough frame that kept them two feet or so off the ground. The boys lay face downward along the length of the logs, their heads resting on pillows made of plantain leaves. Over the bed there was a rough shelter, sloping down to the ground behind, but open all along the front and on two sides. From the roof was hung a sacred banana, which initiates and instructors would set swinging as an understood command for the boys to start singing. The boys were forbidden to touch the banana, being told they would die if they did.

There were all sorts of other taboos, or restrictions. To get wet, particularly by being outside when it rained, was sure to bring death. To eat certain foods was strictly prohibited. The boys had to eat without using their hands directly, spearing the food with sticks. They were forbidden to eat with their initiated relatives. The sound of the bull-roarer, a piece of wood that makes a strange whirring noise when spun around on the end of a cord, was meant to be the voice of a forest demon, and the boys had to show due respect and terror when they heard it.

During the daytime, when the villagers were present, either as instructors or just as visitors, the boys adhered faithfully to all these and many other rules. By their own rules, however, the villagers were

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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OOO spot a telltale movement first. Kenge's eyes were sharper, but he was seldom able to identify anything that was more than a few hundred yards away, whereas Henri could tell at several miles.

Everywhere the view was different, and Kenge was as fascinated by this constant change as he was by the abundance of game. The sun shone warmly in a clear sky, but the Ruwenzori had hidden themselves once more in a bank of cloud. Looking at them from the north side of the park we could see only the forest-covered lower slopes.

[189] All at once Kenge said, "I dreamed of my mother last night, and of my wife Maliamo. My mother was crying for me."

I asked him if he wanted to stay another day or so in the park, or go back, and he said he wanted to go back just as soon as he could. When we got back to the guest houses we heard that the superintendent was on his way, so we decided to leave at once rather than have any arguments as to whether it was better for a white man to eat in the kitchen with a Pygmy, or a Pygmy to eat in the dining room with white men. Henri returned with us to the entrance to the park, where he and Kenge said a fond farewell, Kenge giving him some of our stock of rice as a present.

Where the road leaves the heights above the plains and crosses over to the forest plateau, we stopped the car and got out to have a last look. The scene was at its most beautiful, and I waited for several minutes while Kenge took it all in, shaking his head and clucking his tongue in amazement. When he spoke all he said was, "The [190] *Père* Longo was right, this God must be the same as our God in the forest. It must be one God."

Our homeward trip was a triumphant one. Kenge sang loudly as we got farther and farther into the forest. He was so happy to be back that he forgot temporarily about his mother and Maliamo, and himself suggested stopping in several places, which we did.

foods. This may be due to a recognized allergy, to some unpleasant association, or to any one of a number of causes. The animals involved in these tabus include porcupines, snakes, and other slow game not found among the clan totems.

The animals of the forest, which symbolize clans, sexes, and individual and conditional idiosyncrasies, are very real people to the pygmies. In the old days, the mythical time, they could all talk and were on an even footing with men. Each species was symbolized by one individual, who was given an honorific name, as Mr. Turtle, Mr. Gray Antelope, or Mr. Chimpanzee. Mr. Turtle was a very wise and tricky individual, and the smallest antelope of all was King of the Beasts. The pygmies and their Negro hosts have an elaborate folklore about these animals and all their doings which might shed considerable light on their human relations.

Ritual symbols.—To the pygmies, water, rain, storm, thunder, lightning, snakes, and rainbows are all parts of a single symbolic configuration. The elements of this configuration, of course, represent the sudden rainstorms which arise without warning in the afternoons and sometimes, rarely, in the mornings as well. These may prevent hunting; flood huts; cause dead limbs to fall, crushing huts and killing people; or occasionally kill them by bolts of lightning. No other element in their life causes so much disturbance or upsets them so profoundly.

Both pygmies and Negroes believe in a *Nyama ya mai* (Swahili) or water animal, who lurks in streams and plays dangerous tricks on people. Sometimes he tips canoes over; sometimes he will grab the ankle of a woman fording a stream, so that she slips, and may even drown. If any serious mishap occurs in or in connection with the

4: Putnam E-5 (no date) 1948 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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776 water, the people, will say, "It was the water animal that did it." Sometimes the water animal comes up out of his native element and assumes the form of a rainbow.

821 172 From time to time the Negroes and the pygmies find neolithic axes, which they say are "turds of lightning," excreta dropped in the process of the storm; when lightning splits a tree, one of these turds is always left.

776 The pygmies also believe in totemic spirits, which live in spirit places—in rock piles, hollow trees, and holes in the ground; classic *genii loci*. On their account, the pygmies refuse to go near certain rocky hills, on which there may be dense thickets. If a pygmy is out hunting with a white man, the white man may say, "Let us beat in there; there is game in that thicket." The pygmy will reply, "No Bwana, don't go in there; that hill is full of *sitana*."

[192] The word *sitana* is the local Swahili or Kingwana equivalent for the Arabic word *shaitan*, plural *shaytin*.

Ritual Activities

789 821 **Weather magic.**—One class of weather ritual involves the use of physical symbols taken from the context of situation—leaves, which wave violently and are blown down in a storm. Schebesta [1] describes a simple ceremony of this kind in an Efe camp. During the height of a storm the oldest man in the camp came out of his house and stood in front of it. He brought with him leaves and ashes. First he threw most of the ashes upward into the wind, then he smeared ashes on a leaf, rubbed some onto his own body, and threw the rest into the wind.

Other methods mentioned by Schebesta are the burning of certain leaves,

[113] [1] Schebesta, P., *Among Congo Pygmies*. London: Hutchinson & Co., 1933. p. 243.

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